

*Horror in Culture & Entertainment*

# RUE MORQUE

BLOOD  
SWEAT AND CLAMS

## WOLF COP

HEADLINES OUR  
TRIBUTE TO INDIE HORROR  
PLUS! SEXY WOLF-COP PULL-OUT POSTER!

#145 THE 2014 CINEFEST



**BIGGER, BADDER  
BLOOD ON A BUDGET**  
THE WILDEST D.I.Y. GENRE FILMS

**FROM DUSK TILL  
DAWN: THE SERIES**  
ROBERT RODRIGUEZ ON HIS  
MEXICAN VAMPIRE SAGA

**THE LIVING  
DEAD MUSEUM**  
TAKE A TOUR OF JOURNE GROUND ZERO

COVER: RYAN HILL (WOLF-COP); LIONEL  
PLEASE REPRINT UNDER FILM AND VIDEO

PLUS! THE VIDEO THAT WOULDN'T DIE • BLUE MOVIE CINEMA'S BIGGEST • HEAVY METAL MOVIES • CROSBY HARRISON'S 'TIE JERAM TONG

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Reiter: Barbra & Symphonic Fantastique

# NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND

Canada can't boast a rich heritage of homegrown monster movies. Cronenberg's done us proud on the body horror front, we've got psychoslashers/bodygymns well-represented in movies such as *My Bloody Valentine*, *Black Christmas*, *Disturbia*, *Damaged* and the *Phone Night* series; our worthy contributions to the zombie canon include *Deadhouse*, *Alas and Pity* and *The Changing of the Guard*. It's enough to stake a claim in the history of haunted house cinema. On the monster front, our most famous movie creature is probably the werewolf, thanks to the *Ginger Snaps* trilogy. Now *WolfsCop* takes these hairy females in representing the lycanthrope as the country's closest thing to a national movie monster.

The werewolf makes sense for us Canucks: not only for practical reasons (it's scary, over-the-top cool), but there's a duality that appeals to us on a cultural level, which really makes *WolfsCop* a Canadian film aside from its obvious prairie setting. While *Ginger Snaps* gave us an amazing metaphor for adolescence and female sexuality, *WolfsCop* is about something referred to as Canadian cinema's "obsession of masculinity." Throughout our movie history there are narratives featuring male characters who fail at being manly or are a parody of traditional male heroism. Robert Fehrnberg described the trend in his 1987 essay "Cowboy, Bully, or Glue? The Gender Life of a Younger Brother" as "inequality at the male protagonist – his moral failure, especially and most notably, in his relationships with women." He explains that the male protagonist in our movies lives in the shadow of the American hero, is subjugated, and ends up either a coward, bully or clown in Canadian gothic cinema. These characters show up in films such as *Canadian Girl*, *Black Christmas*, *Death Wishland*, *Damaged*, *Alas, The Fly*, *Antlers*, *Splice* etc. As these examples prove, through immature characters who fail at being heroic but not detesting his bad guy, misogynist, bully or belittling women, or are shown as total dorks (Fogel's *Lag in Canadian Girls* I'm looking at you), this critic doesn't revitalize bad movies, though, and I'd say it makes genre films more interesting for not following typical cultural stereotypes.

A werewolf story is the perfect narrative to explore this crisis, as chests don't get much hungrier; dispositions growler and apocalyptic monster than with lycans. The film, interestingly and in an amusing way, jokes fun at the whole masculinity thing while also giving us a man at action to cheer for. Our human protagonist, Leo, is a disrespected, neglected drunk constantly on the verge of getting shit-canned until he becomes a werewolf who then tears people to shreds, drives around in a badass car, clothes up crime and has a cinematic (possibly) sex. He goes from clown to hero in one cult film!

One of the reasons we decided to put *WolfsCop* on the cover and celebrate it is the context of indie filmmaking, however, in because it's also the cure for something on Canadian artist lower termed Cultural Drings. It means that we don't like our own movies. There are a bunch of reasons for this, including constantly being in the shadow of American productions with actual marketing budgets. The now-mentioned characters that we had to cheer for and a reliance on government grant money that has traditionally favoured big-budget, low-key drama over entertainment value.

But the task was then to change all that, and the makers of *WolfsCop* are trying to build a new model this winter. Technology is more affordable than ever, which gives filmmakers a smaller communities a shot (ask me some post-horror movies from Regina...). The market may be crowded for indie makers (we're flooded with more indie films than we could ever count), but so long as you can make something worth seeing and are willing to work just as hard at building a fanbase through social media and other means, the filmmaking dream is achievable for anyone. In Canada that's particularly important for filmmakers who no longer have to deal with agency-driven funding bodies, large distribution companies or censor boards to make their dark dreams a reality. I see the *WolfsCop* character as a metaphor for this new phase: Time to release the beast!

Cronenberg isn't easy to change an entire system, but I hope the issue at the very least respects independent and versatile independent filmmakers to make their indie movie. I guess it's not just the issue that the very definition of what's "indie" is debatable, nor did it go unnoticed by us that there almost no female filmmakers represented here (gender topic for a later discussion), but I got discouraged by those things. Instead, pay tribute to the kinds of films that are catching our writers' attention, seek up the talent from those who create on the fringes. I'm inspired by Robert Rodriguez' job interview from participating in cinematic experiments to finance his first indie film, *El Mariachi*, to bringing *Don Quixote* (a *Don Quixote* TV) and consider the power of an independent movie such as *Agnes of the Evening* which inspired a cultural phenomenon worthy of its own museum.

So just read about some nightmarish horror flicks and the dream people who make them and deserve your support. They're hungry like the... *WolfsCop*

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# Deadlines

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS — HORROR HAPPENINGS

## HORROR COMICS FIELD LOSES TWO LEGENDS

The world of horror comics lost two of its defining creators this spring. Al Feldstein, editor and co-creator of such classic EC Comics horror titles as *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Vault of Horror* and *The Heart of Fear*, died at his Manhattan condo on April 29. Just a few days later, Dick Ayers, whose horror career stretched from drawing and inking pre-Code supernatural-themed stories in the 1940s and '50s to illustrating gore-drenched shockers for Dark Publications in the '70s, died on May 4 of his home in White Plains, New York. Feldstein was 83; Ayers had just celebrated his 80th birthday.

Though Feldstein is best known for his 29-year run as editor of *Mad* magazine, horror fans will remember him for his role in creating horror comics as we know them today.

"Feldstein was involved in writing, drawing and editing what are arguably the best and most influential horror comics of all time," says comics historian Mike Howell, author of *The World's Worst of Dark Publications: Comic Book's Most Wicked Masters of Young Minds*.

Feldstein launched his comic-book career while he was still in high school with a stab at the legendary *SAM* (see *Stoke*), where to begin as an office assistant and eventually become a full-fledged illustrator. Feldstein's tenure at EC Comics began in 1948 when the Brooklyn native was brought on board as an artist; he soon graduated to other duties, including writing and editing.

"Publisher Bill Gaines and Feldstein hit it off very well and found that they had similar interests — interests that included science fiction and horror stories," Howell explains. "Wanting to be leaders instead of followers, they decided to create an all-out horror comic in the style they liked. They sprinkled horror stories into their existing crime comics, and the response was terrific. They canceled the crime titles and EC horror was born."

Feldstein served as editor, writer and occasional cover artist for several of EC's horror titles until the mid-'50s, when the Comics Code Authority essentially shut down the booming horror comics business.

"It's safe to say Al Feldstein has been a big part of every horror fan's life, from the '50s through to the present, whether they know it or not," Howell adds. "His groundbreaking comic-book work has

influenced countless writers, artists and filmmakers who in turn have influenced the next generation, and so on. The Feldstein legacy will continue to flourish until long after we're all gone."

The same can be said for Ayers, who often collaborated with Jack Kirby during his lengthy stint at Marvel Comics. Besides creating the original Ghost Rider character, Ayers worked on such horror-themed titles as *Strange Tales*, *Journey Into Mystery* and *Uncanny Tales*.

"The more I did of it, the more I got to like it," Ayers said of his horror debut during an interview with *Rue Morgue* in 2010 (see *RR*). "It was fun. In fact, my mother-in-law, when she saw what I was doing, said, 'Don't you get nightmares from drawing that stuff?' and I said, 'No, if anything, it gets it out of my system.'"

Like Feldstein, Ayers took a leave from his professional life when he served Subcomittee on Juvenile Delinquency, where that horror comics were just too horrible. He went on to enjoy an illustrious career as an inker and penciler for Marvel titles such as *Sgt. Fury* and *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *Thunderbolt* and *Thunderbolt*.

Ayers returned to the horror genre years later to provide grotesque artwork for Dark Publications, where he was often asked to redraw and increase the

gore quotient of pre-Code horror titles.

"This was a true dichotomy," says Howell, who got to know Ayers while writing his aforementioned



Courtesy of Douglas M. DeAngelis, Fred S. Golden and Joe DiStasio of Comic Book



Courtesy of Stephen

Al Feldstein (top) and Dick Ayers

2010 book *WAMPYRUS*. "[Dick was] a complete gentleman — a kinder man I have never met — and a purveyor of gory stomach-churning horror artwork [in book] the only way over the top, with talking tongues and popping eyeballs. He happily called himself 'the popping-eyeball artist and poet' he wished he was able to do even more than the 20 stories he drew for [Dark Publications]."

Feldstein was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2003. Ayers was inducted four years later in 2007.

APRIL SWELLINGS

# SLASH JOINS RUE MORGUE CINEMA'S *CUT THROATS NINE*

The monster in the latest Rue Morgue Cinema project is not the miserable ghost of its debut feature film, *The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh*, nor is it a demonic force or handish creature. It is Satan's monster—people—that squats molestedly in the heart of this film. As much as thriller and a western as pure horror, *Cut Throats Nine* will explore the limits of human depravity and the anguished attempt to riden a minority in the face of violence and degradation.

Written by Rodrigo Gudiño (*The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh*) with Joseph O'Brien (*The Devil's Mile*), and is based on *Cut-Throats Nine*, the original work of Joaquin Penner Marshment and Santiago Moncada. The remake has found its executive producer and champion in rock star Slash, of Guns N' Roses fame, who says that it was the power of the narrative that drew him to the project.

"What makes the story so compelling is that there's a moral centre. It's not a mindless, no-let-film, it's not a story without any real depth to it. There's a lot of richness. I think it's classy, and as dark and brutal as it is, it has a kind of subtlety to it. This was the kind of story where I just loved the script so much [that I wanted to] take that narrative and turn it into something, fleshing out the story and making it work as cinema."

This will be Slash's second foray into film, following his work on 2013's tale of demonic possession *Waiting Left to Fear*, for which he and Nicholas O'Loake also composed the score.

The original 1972 Spanish film, also known as *Condemned a War* (translated as "Condemned to Live"), blends the ragged landscapes and gritty storytelling of a western with shocking gorehouse gore. The basic narrative structure remains the same: a Gudiño's version: a prisoner transport containing nine convicts leaves several guards to a robbery and crash, leaving a single sergeant and his daughter to get the shackled man to their destination. The filmmaker seeks to bring as added depth to the characters and their cir-



cumstances, to the relationships between them and the horrors that they face collectively and at the hands of each other.

"The characters are so memorable, so dark and individual between the nine of them, and also the sergeant," explains Slash. "They all have such visual characteristics that make them scary, they're very formidable, and dark and twisted and all very different, and that's really what drew me to the story. To really understand the scope of these characters, it's not just what they do, it's who they are, how they act, their mannerisms and their voices and how they express [themselves]. My favourite thing about horror movies is the villain: how they look and the personality that comes across and the qualities of that individual that makes them so iconic."

While the tension between the nine convicts and the sergeant presents the most obvious source of narrative conflict, Slash says it's the story of the sergeant's daughter that he is most excited to explore.

"When you start to really understand her and where she finally has — I wouldn't call it a moment of triumph, but there is a clarity for her —



**Seen Cut Throats:** Director Rodrigo Gudiño, (top) producer Slash, and (right) the original film's poster

that's going to be an interesting thing to see."

Though casting continues, stars currently attached to the project include Mads Mikkelsen of *Hannibal* fame, Harvey Keitel (*Reverend Gage*), Julian Richings (TV's *Supernatural*), *The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh* and *Kiss Koldie-Ried* (*Lost Girl*). Production is currently slated to begin this coming September.

**NATURAL ZENA WALSHGORTH**



## ZOMBIES MEET CARBS AT DAWN OF THE DONUT

Are donuts as tasty as brains? How about a brain-shaped apple fritter (pictured)? It's just one of the zombie-themed treats for sale at Ghouls of the Donut. The Independent Spokane Washington, store opened in August of last year and has seen its customer base grow rapidly on the strength of donuts such as the Double Tap ("zused" nut) with chocolate icing with Red Hots and raspberry filling), the Corpse ("mised" rag caramel icing and cream sea salt) and the Romero ("trailed" nap, chocolate icing and mint M&M's).

"We were hopeful that other people shared our passion for both sandwiches and donuts," explains co-owner Martin Juchacz. "Big box operators have a unique factor of 24/7. When was the last time you went to Knepp Knease, and not only had a great time, but so did your kids? We also donate leftover donuts at the end of the day to charity to feed the hungry. We don't have robots that make our donuts, we believe we are having a positive impact on our city while at the same time having some fun."

The store, which also offers a line of Walking Dead-inspired donuts such as The Governor (a raised bun, maple icing, bacon chunks), often sees images that stretch around the block. Judith and his wife Paige recently added a vending truck that drives around the city in order to meet demand. Starting with a giant Dawn of the Donut sign that mimics the George A. Romero Dawn of the Dead movie poster pilfering the shop's location, the zombie theme infects every corner of the store. Visitors are greeted by bloody hand prints on walls, zombie-faced servers ready for photo ops, a life-sized zombie-donut mascot and zombie movie posters and realistic weapons.

"Customers come dressed up as zombies all the time," notes Jacheth.



of the store's business. "The level of dress-up is excellent!"

Ultimately, though, Daws of the Gores's customers shuffle through the doors for the food. Judnich doesn't hesitate to offer his personal favourite item.

*"The Re-Avigator, a raised round donut with Red Bull-infused icing. It's a killer donut, like a caffeine punch and donut all in one."*

CHARLOTTE STEAR

## ENTRAILS

**X-FILES** Publishing has announced *X-Files: Year Zero*, a five-part miniseries that focuses on Mulder and Scully investigating a mystery dating back to the 1940s, and which delves into how the X-Files department was established. The series will be written by Karl Kesel and illustrated by Vic Melhuber and Greg Scott. It will hit comic book stores next month.

**A**ctress/maker John Schneider (best known for co-starring in the original *Dukes of Hazzard*) has made an "Expendable" of horror movies. Schneider features genre favorites Kane Hodder (*Voyager's* J.J. Abrams), Don Strunk (*Melvin van Peebles*), R.A. Mitrnick (*Garrison*), Tucker Cheshire (*Maximum*), Bill Mosley (*The Tucker Cheshire*), and Michael B. Scott.

Broo Grant (Malwarens Z somdel) playing themselves attending a small horror convention on Friday the 13th. After running out of pullenae and money, the group accepts a cash offer to grace the local BC park, be-

Things take a dark turn when they arrive. Michael Barryman (*The Adversary*) and John Kasser (aka, *The Cryptkeeper*) co-star. The movie is set for release later this year.

**J**Atlantic actress Caroline Munro has signed on to star in the remake of the 1974 movie *Magnepussy*. The screen was co-written by original *Magnepussy* director Joseph Losey, who died last September, and director of the new version, Victor Matalfina. It will feature special effects by Colin Arthur, who also worked on the original film. Shooting wrapped in Spain this past April. There is currently no release date.

Friday does little in coming to the Brazilian screen, and unlike the Canadian Friday

the 1960s show from the late '60s. They are well featured Jason Voorhees reimagined in a number of different time periods during hour-long episodes. Creator and director of the award movie, Sean Dunne, says,

an based as executive producer. In its screen Friday the 13th news, David Bruckner, who directed the segment 'Amateur Night' for WFOZ, is in talks to direct yet another robot, originally reported to be a fraud-buster film.

• The fifth annual GWAFF-8-0 will go ahead as planned on August 16, despite the death of GWAFF honoree Dave Brockie this past March. The day before the event, a free public memorial concert will be held at Madriz's Lake in Richmond, Virginia, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. This year's GWAFF-8-0 will see performances by Body Count and Mobb Deep, and include a chance to trade GWAFF's new beer "Killer." More info at [members.com](http://members.com).

World War Z author Max Brooks' comic *Excalibur: Perseus* has been picked up for a TV series by Legendary Entertainment. The story explores the clash between zombies and vampires after a zombie virus threatens to wipe out the bloodsuckers' food source: humans. Brooks is on hand to write the pilot episode.

CHARLOTTE STEAR

**MONSTRO BIZARRO**

According to Discovery's *Destiny* series, *Alchemia* Channel's Season 2 premiere of *Alchemia* already produced record-high ratings. Its cryptology-themed information series follows a team of expert handlers and happens as they pursue legendary "monsters" in the Appalachian wilderness. Led by Jackwoodman, John "Trapper" Rice, the group—known as the Appalachian Investigators of Mysterica and Splinterage (AIMS)—has set its sights on a wide range of secrets in past seasons, including the Mohicans, Lost Decade, *Disasters* and *Redwolves*. While the show does feature a cast of real-life hunters who "pursue" traditional cryptids, their adventures are highly dramatized, much to the chagrin of many serious cryptologists. The primary appeal of the show comes from the cast members themselves who come off as part of lovable "hillbillies" who dedicate their time and skills to monster hunting.

JOE BLAZHNIK

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# CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

BY JAY P. BOGGITT  
L45

In April, a 30-year-old Irish woman was arrested after her neighbors' husband discovered the corpse of an infant hidden in the garage. Police later confirmed an unborn child in bass on the premises, also believed to be Irish.

French procedural material for *The Dancer* all confirmed a still from a scene that the studio had cut from the final film, depicting a priest in a confessional booth with his head resting in his lap.

In Scottish criminal trials of yesterday, if a jury found the accused guilty of an excusable offense, the presiding judge would throw out a double-bottom reading of the coroner's death certificate.

Two California prisons allegedly performed a series of killings between late 2013 and early 2014 while wearing GPS trackers. They had been fitted with after being released from prison.

The island of Poveglia, which is located in the Venetian lagoon and has a reputation for being "the most haunted place in the world," was put up for lease this spring by the Italian government.

When 13-year-old New Orleans socialite Makayla Escalante died earlier this year, she was dressed in a pink floral box with a brooch reading "bliss" fastened to her chest and positioned on a bench to read over her own wake with champagne and cigarettes in hand — all per her last wishes.

According to historian John Stow, Henry VIII had roughly 72,000 people executed for crimes during his 38-year reign.

Devilish Richard Linklater (*Cloud* and *Before*) is renting a garage apartment on his property to convicted murderer Dennis Tiede, who was recently released from prison and was the subject of the *Blindside* (2011) film *Reverie*.

One of the common Victorian-era treatments for erysipelas, a skin disease, applied to the sufferer's ribs.

The word "barker" evolved from here "bark line," which was the pine on which the bodies and bones of the dead were once buried.

Catie Herlihy, who played Levni in *Alien* when she was ten years old, was so bullied by her school as to because she appeared in the film that she stopped talking about her role in it until she was an adult.

Old European superstition dictated that crosses made from rotten wood offered protection from witches' spells.

Irish glider museum: The Mahoney, who performed as a villain as Judea Pearl, among others, died in 2007 from the fish-eating disease neurocysticercosis after accidentally biting himself in the face with a dove beak.

COMPILED BY JENNIFER L. KUBAN  
WITH A HEAVY DUTY TO MURDER FACTS BY JAY P. BOGGITT

## BODY HORROR

PAPA EMBERTS II  
AN APPY Phil Acker (pawtucket.com)

4 "This is one of my favorite tattoos I've done recently. It's Papa Emberts II from the band Ghost B.C. Ghost is one of my favorite bands right now and I really like their dark imagery, so I knew it would make for a cool tattoo. They put on an awesome show — it's like going to a musical tribute event."

## THE RUC MORGUE SICK TOP SIX

HOUSES OF THE HOLY HIDEOUSNESS



1. SILENT HILL  
ALESSA MAKES A MESS 'A CHRISTABELLA
2. EVILSPEAK  
STANLEY'S SARDINE SMORCHPLAY
3. THE CHURCH  
RISE OF THE FORTEN CORPSE PILE
4. DRACULA: PRINCE OF DARKNESS  
DRAC'S ASHES BATHED IN BLOOD
5. RED STATE  
WRAPPED AND TAPPED ON THE CROSS
6. PRINCE OF DARKNESS  
SATANIC SLIME GRAPHOIDS



## TORTURED TAGLINES

STRAIT-JACKET (1994)  
WARNING: STRAIT-JACKET  
WINDY DEFACTS ARE MURDERED

## Necronomicomic

BY JAY P. BOGGITT



WHILE HE FELT SAFE AROUND THE MIDNIGHT MEAT TERN,  
HE WAS TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR THE TI-45 SALAD BAR.

See more of Jay's work at jaypoggitt.com

SEE A GREAT TATTOO? POST IT ON A NEW BLOG: PAPA EMBERTS II



# NEEDFUL THINGS

## 1 FULL-ZOMBIE SOAP \$6.95

The dead are among us — and even more between her fangs. This carefully moulded opaque soap evokes the basic color from Lucie Pukli's *Zombie* and smells like pumpkin pie, which is the official scent of the zombie-apocalypse pling with petri-faction, obviously.

They will return to wash the flesh of the living at [houseofzombiehouse.com](http://houseofzombiehouse.com).

## 2 SKULL AND BRAIN FRIENDSHIP NECKLACE SET \$127

Nothing says "We got together like a cerebral cortex in a crystal cavity" like these brass brain and skull pendants. Split 'em with your BFF — or tell out even worse the brains of the apocalypse and end up keeping both of them for yourself 'til a few years later and brains are concerned.

Leave your head (and its contents) at [shoploft.com](http://shoploft.com) (search: "brain skull").

## 3 THE MAP OF ZOMBIES \$30

There's no messing with art that'll come in handy during the zombie apocalypse, and this incredibly detailed poster from Mark Van Pelt features over 350 suburbs of shuffling, brain-meat-to-meat — along with a few hints for dispatching them. Ignore it at your peril.

Grouping chiller cartography at [markvanpelt.com](http://markvanpelt.com).

## 4 CHRISTINE MODEL KIT \$24.99

You don't women make a model of just any ol' '66 Plymouth, right? This model kit of Stephen King's desecrated lady-car comes moulded in either red or white with detailed interior and exterior parts and a sheet of decals — oh, and an ancient, evil soul.

She'll possess you. Then destroy you. She's death on wheels. She's... available at [rampartmodels.com](http://rampartmodels.com).



CRYPTIC  
COLLECTIBLES

UNIVERSAL MONSTERS MYSTERY GAMES  
(1960s, 1970s)

During the height of the '60s monster craze, Hasbro released this series of Universal monster-themed board games, comprised of *Dracula*, *Mummy*, *Frankenstein*, *Mummy*, *Ghoulies*, *From the Black Cape* and *Phantom of the Opera*. Featuring colorful boards, spinners and measure cardboard playing pieces, the most striking element

was the stunning Aurora model kit-style box art. The *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *Wolfman* games can be bought on eBay for around \$100 each, while the much rarer *Phantom*, *Ghoulies* and *Mummy* have been known to fetch over \$1,000 apiece.

JAMES BIRRELL

WHO CRYPTIC COLLECTIBLES AT [800-MODELS.COM](http://800-MODELS.COM)



PART MAN, PART WOLF, ALL EXPLOITATION HYBRID — **WOLFcop** IS PART OF A NEW BREED OF INDIE HORROR FILMMAKING CLAWING AT THE DOOR

# HOWL OF JUSTICE



by SEAN PLUMMER

## **C**OULD WOLFcop BE THE MOVIE HERO OF SUMMER 2014?

While Tom Cruise blows up aliens this June in *Edge of Tomorrow*, the lycan-thropic lawman of *WolfCop* faces off bikers, drives a custom muscle car, howls at the moon, and drinks enough whiskey to knock down a grizzly bear, let alone a wolf. What's not to love? *WolfCop* is the first film produced by CineCoup, an online "film accelerator" that pitted ten Canadian filmmaking teams against one another last year. The idea was to use social media and viral marketing to create a fan base for a movie that did not yet exist. The initiative, funded by private Canadian investors, awarded the winning team a million-dollar budget to make its film and guaranteed theatrical distribution. It also threatens (promises?) to







tat and basically shut in his high school gymnasium. So that stuck in my brain, and [now] it must be easier to make movies now than twenty years ago. We have a HD camera, we have a local crew who hasn't been working a lot lately and could pull it together on our own. We shot the trailer in just a pistol of concept. But we would have needed to try to find funding for. While we were in the middle of that, we read about OneCup. It was almost too good to be true.

#### WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE ONECUP CONCEPT?

I was a little skeptical when I first heard about it. It seemed like Canadian idol or American idol. What are the chances they would be interested in something called 'WebCap? But then, when I turned "passionate distrust," my was perked up. I would not want to be looking myself and hear a year later that they had picked a project similar to WebCap. We had to go for it.

#### HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOU THAT AUDIENCES HAVE THE CHANCE TO SEE ONECUP IN A THEATRE, AS OPPOSED TO YOU GOING ON BROADCAST?

It's really important. That's the reason I wanted to get into filmmaking. I fully embrace the new world we live in, where people are watching movies at home or on Apple TV, or their smartphones. But I would be lying if I said I didn't make WebCap for a theatrical experience. I want to be in a theatre with 200 people who are laughing or screaming or really worked out.

#### TELL ME ABOUT THE ONECUP EXPERIENCE.

It was very intense. It was much harder than I anticipated it would be. Also more eye-opening, for me. Up until that point I had been very guarded with my ideas. I had a few other horror film ideas, and I would barely tell my closest friends. You just worry that the idea will get out in the ether and someone will take it or make it first. So I felt in a way that we were taking a huge risk putting our potential product out there. The script's there. Someone could take it. But within a week or so we had a crazy amount of hits on our trailer and such a positive outpouring of feedback. That was the biggest eye-opener for me. It was a lot of work. There were weekly rides and challenges. You're basically hustling week to week to keep people interested. The upswing of it was that people were genuinely passionate and supportive. You'd think there would be a crazy number of internet trolls saying, "You're stupid, your idea's stupid." And, sure, those existed, but I was just gobsmacked at the support. And not just in Canada, around the world.

#### WHAT DID THE RUG SUI?

Just the hyperbole of reaction. Your best case scenario is "It sounds interesting, I'll check it out." But we were getting things like, "How can I see this now? I'll buy tickets in advance." And I'd have to Google translate just to figure out what these people were saying. It was surreal.



WOLFPOD

Shirley Gane  
TheGane

Wolfpod got a little noisy with the re-announcement that local beauty had moved. Shooting Gane would be handling scoring duties for the Saskatoon-based indie horror comedy. It's a unique approach: gives that the band has no previous experience with soundtracks, but the Polaris-nominated outfit manages to make it work with an apt palate of doomy riff rock tracks. Jones Carpenter synth and ambient psychedelic numbers that manage to combine the two. The opening songs sound like they're written for a beer commercial, something that seems hilariously appropriate for a movie about an alcoholic Canadian warner. They're head-bopping, fuzzed-out, bluesy riffs, but the album seen shifts gears into re-rock just-keyboards territory with an obvious Carpenter flourish — Prince of Darkness being the prevailing vibe. A recurring western theme pops up in certain tracks, as well, such as in the otherwise analog synth. The Family of the Warden, reminiscent of the way Angelo Badalamenti worked retro TV detective themes into *True Peaks*. And the album only becomes more ambitious as it goes along, with later tracks, notably *Gotta Drive*, delivering high-tempo psychedelic rock loaded with synth and sound effects again with cowboy underlines. Though it's undeniably a soundtrack, WebCap comes close to serving as a progressive rock album in its own right — one that is at times as hokey as a movie about a, um, well-cop should be, and at other times more slick and menacing than the subject matter itself. A score worth asking your carver into. **B+**

ARON VON LUTER

WE ARE DEFINITELY INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS. THIS ISN'T ABOUT THE MONEY FOR US. WE ARE LIVING AND BREATHING TO GET THESE MOVIES MADE.

—LOWELL DEAN



CINECOUP FOUNDER J. JOY TAKES ON THE BROWN CANADIAN  
MOVIE BIZ, ONE INDIE FILM AT A TIME

# HOW TO MARKET A MONSTER MOVIE

—J. JOY PETERSON

J. JOY KNOWS YOUR TRIP: MUST CANADIAN FILMS SUCK.

He agrees with you. Launching the browser- or desktop- or mobile film platform CineCoup needs his fellow Canadians to see *WinCap*. The one-time video store clerk turned budding indie movie mogul hopes CineCoup's first production (revises the heady post-bloody days of the '70s and early '80s when Canadians made weird movies

When I think back on my video store days, *The My Bloody Valentine Preen Agent About Christmas* is all that crazy shit that Canadians used to make and then I look at these dysfunctional family films we make now. I'm like what happened?" he says.

As a videophile filmmaker Joy (below) spent the late '80s working in Toronto's film industry doing everything from swapping cables through dig out to working with legendary Canuck movie producer Peter Simpson. Efforts to make his own films led nowhere.

Then a long-distance romance led him to relocate to Vancouver. There he became frustrated by the burgeoning start-up scene centered in the city's Gastown district (he refers to Vancouver as the "wild west" of investment) and co-founded digital marketing company cineCoup.

Frequent business trips to Toronto found Joy hanging out with old filmmaking buddies who would invariably complain about Canada's broken

movie funding and distribution systems. A relatively objective examination of said systems led him to conclude that this could actually be the best time to be an independent filmmaker.

There are no gatekeepers," he says. You don't have to ask permission [to make a movie]. All the models are breaking down. The fact that a guy like me can go to [Complex Executive VP] Michael Kennedy with a new business model and he's all ears is I think significant."

That new business model was CineCoup. Basically, the company would use private money to fund and fund would be Canadian filmmakers with reliable script ideas and put them into an intense 90-day boot camp, during which they would use social media tools to create an audience for their film. Fans of the movie ideas would then help spread the word online, hopefully creating a built-in audience for the final product, which would then be distributed in Cinéplex theatres across Canada.

Winner of the inaugural round in 2013 was, of course, *Sebastian* (screenwriter/producer David Sear for *WinCap*). Sear and his team had already been developing the *WinCap* idea for more than a year before becoming one of the 92 teams to join the CineCoup experiment. Joy was impressed by Sear's initiative in building *WinCap*'s fan base and getting aggressive with its marketing, which included television appearances and press events.

[Reinventing us] the only business where you can spend a million on a movie and nothing on marketing and nobody calls you an asshole for that," he says. "You do that with a restaurant, you call you an asshole. One thing we want to do is bring attention back. Get people into the best, butts into the seats. Content is king but the audience is God. They're the only thing that matters."

Helping get butts into seats is one *WinCap* film's motto will be an intensive marketing campaign that includes a soundtrack composed by Seika (can't Shagging Gums [I think early Sabbath means John] Carpenter) released on vinyl, a grade-a score. *WinCap* figures, boosted by an indiepop campaign, convention appearances, surreal comedy parodies and magazine articles like the one you're reading.

This was I just another Canadian movie," Joy promises. "It's something the audience told us they wanted to see get made. And we said, 'Fuck, yeah! Let's do it.'"

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU  
FOUND OUT THAT *WINCAP*  
OUTPERFORMED?

Shocked. Very shocked. I never thought we would win, mostly because at the time I didn't know what kind of projects CineCoup was looking for. My biggest fear was that people would see us as a joke. That's why we put a lot of effort into our trailer, to really showcase the tone. To me, it's a really good film, and I hope people walk in and say this is only as stupid or fun, but they walk out and are shocked that it's a movie, not just a joke or an hour-and-a-half of him howling and cowering at people.

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT  
BUILDING THE MOVIE'S FAN BASE VIA  
SOCIAL MEDIA PRIOR TO IT BEING MADE?

It seemed backwards. I would be lying if I said I was onboard right away and thought it was a genius idea.... Then we let it go and saw how things were going. It's easy to say in hindsight, but we saw that, wow, this was brilliant. We are the little guy, so we don't have the marketing machine that bigger films would have, like *X-Men* or *Spider-Man*.

There are people just devoted to pushing the ideology out there, and they already have a known product. We literally had nothing, so it was kind of a monstrosity to spend three months getting to know people and appearing there with your idea and the one that seems most popular will get made. You've already done your marketing.

HOW ENCOURAGING IS THAT WIDENESS OF *WINCAP* THIS FAR OUT FROM ITS RELEASE?

I guess it could be seen as a double-edged sword. Being an underdog we need that exposure. Because in the theatre, in the summer, how do you compete with *Tamara Drewe*? So I'm hoping it's beneficial and it spreads the word of mouth, that if people forget about us and go to the theatre





We were, "We just finished lunch. Let's take an hour to work on this fight scene." For a whole week it was like a running joke: "Let's go back to that fight scene."

# WOLFCAP EMPHASIZES SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIRAL MARKETING, BUT HOW DOES THAT WEIGH AGAINST HAVING A STRONG MOVIE TO SELL IN THE FIRST PLACE?

The social media and all the excitement means nothing if people hate the movie. Within the confines of the budget, we just basically said, "What do we need in this movie?" I put in as much effort as we could afford. And we definitely brainstormed — Eisenstein and myself — some crazy stuff that we need to see filmmakers do, with some unique approaches to their filmmaking. How do we give people what they are expecting and hoping [for], but [add] a little twist to it, too, so that it's not super-familiar? And hopefully, at the end of the day, they connect to the characters.

# THE WOLFCAP TEAM IS ATTENDING A FEW FAN CONVENTIONS THIS SPRING. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO GET OUT THERE AND SEE THE FUN IN THE FLESH, SO TO SPEAK?

Very important. I think that's what separates us from these bigger things. Like Tom Cruise, right? Tom Cruise isn't going to be at these fan conventions. We wouldn't have a conversation with him. You'd pay \$50 to shake his hand, if you were lucky. So for us, I think that's our weapon. Our advantage is we are real people, personable people. We are definitely independent filmmakers. This isn't about the money for us. We are living and breathing to get these movies made. I'm making a brochure. I love this type of movie.

# HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SAW TOM HODGES' WOLFCAP POSTER FOR THE FIRST TIME? DID YOU GIVE HIM ANY PRACTICAL ADVICE?

I probably stared at it for fifteen minutes and did a little fist pump in my head. It was perfect, it was amazing, and exactly what I expected. When J. Joly, our executive producer, told me he had secured Tom to do the poster, we really didn't give him much guidance. I just gave him some images and discussed the kinds of movies that influenced me and what I wanted from this. I look at that poster and it's so exciting. It's worth making the movie just to have that poster. But when I look closely, all these things are actually in the movie. It's kind of crazy.



# IS A SIGNEE BETTER?

Oh, yeah. Traditionally, when I started writing WolfCap I started writing WolfCap 2 first because I didn't want to do an origin story. I wanted to jump a pit into the chaos. And I got about

twenty pages in and was like, "I'm never going to finance this movie." So I went back and I wrote the origin.

# @ WOLFCAP & FANTASYCRAZY CANNON FOR A YEAR NOW?

It's interesting in the DNA of it, I think that hopefully we've constructed a film that can exist outside of Canada, and maybe Americans would think, "Oh, this is us, too." It's everywhere. It's more like Metropolis or Gotham City than New York or something. I do think it's very Saskatchewan. The beers in the bar are true Saskatchewan beers, the license plates look like Saskatchewan license plates and a great portion of our cast and crew are from Saskatchewan. I think people who watch it in our home province or in Canada will feel ownership over it.

# DO YOU HOPE TO CONTINUE MAKING HORROR MOVIES?

I actually have a couple more horror scripts written, and I'd love to get those films made. But I also just want to make good movies, or movies that make me. I'd love to do comedy. I'd love to do an actual superhero film, too.

# WOLFCAP OPENS JUNE 8, OPPOSITE THE NEW TOM CRUISE FILM, JUNGLE OF DRAGONHIDE. IS WOLFCAP READY TO DATE ON THE CLASH?

I'm hoping we're aiming for different audiences. I mean, I want to see the new Tom Cruise movie, too. For me, it's just so nice that you get to see a Canadian movie like this in theatres, let alone a Canadian movie that doesn't feel like homework, you know? This is a fun movie. It's a ridiculous movie, and I hope there are more people thinking, "Yeah, there should be more Canadian movies like that!"



Making a character: J.J. and Eisenstein bring together up WolfCap on set, and about the poster cast behind the character's origin.





THREE OF OUR INDIE FILM EXPERTS SPOTLIGHT RECENT FEATURES THAT EMBODY THE FIERCE AND INNOVATIVE SPIRIT OF O.J.Y. HORROR

# BIGGER, BLOODIER ON A BUDGET

by PATRICK DOLAN  
THE GORE-NET and LAST CHANCE LANCE

## LAST CHANCE LANCE

*We had a saying back when I served in the budget-strapped Canadian army that we had to do so much with so little that we could pretty much do just about anything with next to nothing. It's that kind of attitude that I've always loved about indie filmmakers: the drive to get the movie completed no matter what it takes—begging, borrowing and even stealing. It's the sinking of everything, including your heart and soul, into the project, sometimes the results are inarguable, but every once in a while, beneath all of the keno syrup, duct tape and biological sandwiches the end result can be truly remarkable*

### DEAD WALKERS: RISE OF THE 4TH REICH

Philip Gardiner  
deadwalkers.org



Over the years, director Philip Gardiner has racked up a pretty impressive collection of documentary films—29 at last count. Not bad for a bloke who's only been directing since 2000! The native of Northamptonshire, England, recently turned his sights to making horror films, and in 2013 he cranked out five titles alone, including *Dead Walkers: Rise of the 4th Reich*. The plot follows a British secret service agent who has uncovered a clandestine Nazi operation in Romania. Having planned to use the occult to create a vast army at the undead, the Reich is once again peering up for world domination, and it's up to him to stop it. While there's no shortage of low-budget Nazi zombie movies being made these days (see last issue for world domination of some of them), Gardiner's docudramatic talent coupled with high-concepting use of computer imagery sound

effects and editing set *Dead Walkers* apart from the indie horror masses.

#### Three questions for Philip Gardiner:

##### Why Nazi zombies?

The Nazis have quite possibly been the scariest motherfucking ever, from their twisted human experiments to genocide. Say the word "Nazi" and there is an immediate reaction. And I wanted to make a zombie film that wasn't a zombie film. I hate zombie films.

##### What's the secret to those impressive FX?

I used Particle illusion for explosions and After Effects for the rest. It was a bloody nightmare! I would have liked to have blown the whole set up and everybody in it, but what can I say, they wouldn't let me.

##### Advice for indie horror filmmakers?

Forget all that crap about artistic integrity. First thing you need to do is look at what sells, and if you can afford the talent, that'll help it sell. If that fails, try and get everything you possibly can for free. See what locations, actors, props and crew you can get. When you have all that, write your story around it. It'll be a lot cheaper.



## DEADLY PRECEDENCE

Shane Cole  
bloodandimages.com



Shane Cole waved me a few years back with a sick slasher he directed called *The Multitude Man*, and I've had him on my radar ever since. So I was excited to come across *Deadly Precedence*, hoping for some more gore. I gotta admit that I was a little unsettled at first to find the title. This time around he had evolved the buckets of blood and opted for a slower, more methodical psychological affair—but I wasn't disappointed. The story centers around a girl who kills herself after spending the night with two friends in a home where a vicious killing took place. She leaves the other girls to deal with both her corpse and the mystery of what happened to her that night in the infamous murder house. Resolve

newsreader Megan Lynn steals the show with her harrowing portrayal of someone losing her grip on reality, packing that a low budget doesn't always mean low quality performance. Overall, this is an atmosphere of the film with a seriously spooky soundtrack and a killer ending that completely hides its cash-strapped nature.

## THE G-STING HORROR

Chris Webb  
g-stringhorror.com



I've always had a soft spot for films that are based on actual events, and I've always had a hard spot for strippers, so this movie occupies both of my, er, spots. Aside from its sleazy title, it's maybe the only film that completely widdles the line between being a found-footage slasher and a personal documentary. The story unfolds around one of San Francisco's oldest landmarks, The Market Street Cinema, which over the years has become a party-gone-wild club, and which harbors a periodically gruesome past. Having already seen the *Greatest Adventure* television episode that inspired the building, director Chadler Webb decided to take things even further by combining interviews he conducted with the staff and strippers who worked at the club with a dramatic recreation of what he believed to be the ghost, a prewar actress Doby that who reportedly still haunts the labyrinthine basement. The result is a sleazy, cheesy thing that's ghoulish and tense even in the most blood-gorched-out there.

Dead Meat



Deadly Precedence



The G-string Horror

## BUOYARD KIPLING'S MARK OF THE BEAST

Jonathan Boname and Thomas Edward Seymour  
bloodandimages.com



Jonathan Boname and Thomas Edward Seymour are the director-genius behind the *Blade* thrillers and I'd always hoped that they would tackle something more serious. Well, you can't get much more serious than the horror story of stewart Owen Imperialist writer Rudyard Kipling. Much of the story was written by Kipling in 1899 and was reviled by most of the English press as being utterly tasteless. Set in a remote forest in Malaya, a group of missionaries is confronted with a terrifying situation after one of their date-ratons an ancient temple, is taken by a demonic priest and transformed into a howling feral beast. Desperate to survive, the rest of the group captures the priest and tortures him until the beast is killed. A major hurdle to overcome when taking on a Kipling story is that the majority of them are set in the least ideal, and unless you're filming a period piece, it's hard to make the transition to a contemporary setting, but that is something that Boname and Seymour deal with masterfully as they present a very poignant lesson about respecting other people's religious beliefs, the publication of torture, and the price of our own morality and morality.



## BAD MEAT

Lulu Jensen  
madhouse.com

I've been a full-fledged vegetarian for almost two years now and I know that we can be gracieher than bear-right. Christian on Sunday, but I swear on a stack of Chicken McNuggets that I won't get like that. I only mention it because this film starts off with some black and white footage that made a meat-packing facility that's been open since the 1920s. And if you can't handle that—you may never gonna be able to handle the remaining 90 minutes, which could have you thinking continuously if that's okay. Set almost completely within the confines of a butchering for my own part, the film follows six kids trying to survive after their parents' convictions have become prisoner cannibals as a result of a long-banned meat. Apparently the film had to be shot and stitched together over a decade of years, but you'd never guess it, as lead-time director Lulu Jensen created a well-shot, meticulously acted, complete gross-out of a movie that's filled with dead dogs, babies, parents, pigs, and gallons and gallons of pork. But besides the thing, according to several articles online, "Lulu Jensen" is actually Wrong Turn director Rob Schmidt, who walked away from the project before it was done. While the true story certainly may be up for debate, one thing is for sure: meat is murder.

Read Lulu's last film column in every issue of *Blood and Images*.

## THE GORE-MET

If there is one period in history to which I can claim to be an eyewitness, it was the home video era. I was a fifteen-year-old horror junkie when my parents bought our first VCR in 1981, and since they waived any restrictions on what I could rent at the video stores we had memberships with, I got a lot of use out of it. Early euro-budget, shot-on-video horror films such as *Crazy Fat Ethel 2* (1987), *Video Violence* (1987), *885* (1988) and *Headless Zombies* (1988) quickly became an integral component of my magnetic tape diet and have informed my contributions to this magazine since the second issue my column appeared in. This is fearless horror filmmaking at the most grassroots level and the very heartbeat of this genre.

### COLLAR

Ryan Nicholson  
prodigym.com



Ryan Nicholson moves in two worlds. He's as much a trained special-effects artist for mainstream film and television productions and he's an underground filmmaker who runs Prodigym Films: "a sleek, compact specializing in horrific films and movies."

*Collar*, his latest gross-out spectacle, features two orders who pay homeless men to fight so they can sell the cellphone video of it. Eventually they happen across a multi-man nicknamed "Maschine". Maschine not only beats up other winners and addicts and rapes street prostitutes, he rips their hearts out and eats them! When he kidnaps a female detective (hopelessly groups of people come up on the screen today) to try and save her

Three questions for Ryan Nicholson

**What was the inspiration for *Collar*?**

It was actually a waking nightmare that developed from all the stress I drove to work through Vancouver's crime- and drug-riddled Downtown Eastside. The mental health issues are brutal down there so the dream was that of a homeless man wandering and seeing other unfortunate souls. I wrote it the next day and knew I had to make the movie to cleanse myself.

**The obviously shot scope of it is pretty, guerrilla-style; do you have any problems with that?**

The first assault scene created a mess for me because the cops rolled up too deep and shut us down. Thank God there were no cops gone! We shot the movie in six days. It was my quickest shoot ever. We rented an A1 and would drive to a location and shoot until we were kicked out or the cops drove by.

**What advice would you give to aspiring horror filmmakers?**

Think about releasing it yourself! Sell your own films on DVD and Blu-ray and communicate with the viewers. Buying the movies (develop your own niche, there's so much content out there you need to stand out).



### BLOOD RUSH

Dave Marlowe  
brunswickfilm.com

*Blood Rush* is told of the current state of low-budget independent horror filmmaking. Where now these films were shot on consumer-grade camcorders and edited on two VCRs or, with a lot of money, on beta cassettes and assembled with a linear video editing suite. Responsive digital technology and non-linear computer editing software have increasingly raised production values for even the most modest of cinematic endeavors. Shot in gorgeous high-definition widescreen, *Blood Rush* is a refreshing spin on the zombie film by incorporating the social aspects of the now-ditched television boogymen. The quirky residents of a small town are slowly turning into flesh-eating zombies. Is it a virus? Is the clinically lame doctor involved? Or did the disgruntled witch doctor (the editor of low-budget *Them*) spill a lot of blood (but not a lot of god-mandating) and a fly single-

cheek angle distinguish this from the hordes of undead movies.



### GROUND ZERO

Channing Lowe  
afilmofrecess.com

Shock O Films is the banner Alternative Cinema/distributors "cackling '90s horror features" under Ground Zero is an ideal example — a professional low-budget production with numerous special effects and makeup sequences, plus an undercurrent of black humor. In the prologue, a political activist breaks into the research lab of a biotech company developing a weaponized virus and injects himself with it in order to demonstrate the effects to the media. An outbreak but should understand "they" discreetly rounds up the anti-disturber, and his reporters and has been executed in an abandoned warehouse. He then awakes in a jar of body removal mortar and a couple of bombing film peeks to clean up the scene. A bitstreamer comedy of errors in-

cludes the disarming blood-baring effects and grisly makeup are drawing points, but it's the smart script, immensely likable characters, and excellent performances that really set this film.



### MORRIS COUNTY

Matthew Corlett  
unavoidable.com

Don't be Underground is a new, independent DVD imprint that began as a Facebook group for fans of underground culture before spawning a website, a video-on-demand service, and a long way film distribution in association with Unearthed Films. *Morris County* is the type of work BFI would love — a worthy underground movie ignored by other distributors. This basic anthology of three stories is similar to the wealthiest — and per the film — most emotionally deviant countries in the States in the final story, "Die," a shy teenager's quiet suburban life goes horribly off the rails in one day. In "The Family Ruble," a Jewish family painfully and vi-

clinty disintegrates. And in "Oliver & Mia"—the only segment with anything resembling levity—in elderly women's forced retirement quickly resolves into fear and death. This is a powerful, soul-crushing film that reflects the isolation of horror.

## LET'S MAKE A... HORROR MOVIE

Michael Todd Schneider  
magspotting.com



Although I actually appear in this one, I liked it because Michael Todd Schneider is an impossibly talented and ferociously independent filmmaker whose work defies any categorization. His films are horrific, surreal and鬼鬼之祟 (creaky) unconventional. His style has been "psychedelic dread." Never fails to do anything in a linear or straightforward fashion. Schneider took behind-the-scenes footage from the making of...And Then I Died (2012) and crafted a wily, fictional documentary on the creation of that film. It's a visceral view of the production of ne-

underground film that centers through dream sequences and bizarre set pieces to portray the trials, tribulations, fears and anxieties he experienced making his movie. Or maybe it's just Schneider putting the audience on, because he's always found the lines between fiction and reality in his work. Regardless, the end is devastating. Look for me interviewing his corpse after an evening of...And Then I Died that I hosted.

Read The Gore-mag's column in every issue of Vice Magazine.



Grand Zero



BRAND NAME

## PATRICK DOLAN

To paraphrase the Godfather of Gore, Herschel Gordon Lewis: Independent films exist to show audiences what Hollywood can't. Although I'm sure he was referring to the content of the films—and more specifically gore—in *his* statement refers to the production as well. Since indie horror doesn't need to recoup the massive investments that more mainstream movies do, the filmmakers can express themselves more freely, including the darkest parts of their imagination. Granted, they often means abysmal production values, illogical story structure and hair-pulling bad acting, but it's rather the way we get the artist's unfettered voice. Remakes and mainstream trends don't tend to concern indie horror filmmakers; they've got a day job and kids to feed, and their pockets aren't deep enough to buy up rights to existing properties. Yes, I'm being cheeky and sentimental but these working-class heroes just want to show you something they love and hope you'll love it, too.

## NIGHT OF THE TENTACLES

Dustin Miller  
drop-starring.com



After narrowly surviving a heart attack, reclusive slacker Dave sells his soul to Satan for a new home. The movie reveals that it's also a tentacle murder mystery from his body which must be fed humans in order to keep him alive. The story takes place entirely in a claustrophobic, triple apartment, where there is no shortage of pined personalities to feed on, but as more tenants are terminated, the vampire viscous organ starts putting its feelers out for Dave's crash into this downtown. Like a modern Frankenstein.

film, this frugal showcase makes great use of two-track puppetry, CGI spatter and its singular setting. Relatively new to the horror world, underwriter Dustin Miller has only been making films since 2010, but in the past four years he's directed eight features (with another one underway) and had a hand in six other productions. Building a fan base via the internet through social networks, blogs and a podcast, Miller has become a name you can trust for fun, gory times, with puppets, practical effects and DJ F-GO.

Three questions for Dustin Miller:

**Where do you find funding for your films?**

Usually they are either self-funded or funded by pre-orders. Buster Gaskett and Duff Soft Zerkus were funded by third parties, but they are the only ones so far I have had a lot of success funding via pre-orders with my new Crumblesack Label! Both of the label's upcoming films! Her Aerie was for-

ward and Shout! were completely funded that way.

**Once you've made a film, how do you get the word out?**

I used to do the whole press release thing, but it turned out to be a waste of time. Mainstream websites and even some websites that ought to just don't really seem to. Now I just rely on Facebook, my mailing list and my established base to help me get the word out. I think word of mouth is my best friend. I still have to supplement it with odd jobs (I'll work music videos, DVD outtakes) but this year has already been better than the previous two. I am pretty optimistic about the future. I am not rich by any means, but I don't really need to be. I just want to keep making movies.

**Advice?**

Don't be a pussy. Pick up a camera. Make movies, not excuses.



Craig Brewer



Video Diary of a Lost Girl



Cinco de Mayo

## VIDEO DIARY OF A LOST GIRL

Laurenz Breining

facebook.com/VideoDiaryOfaLostGirl



Bathed in garish neon colours and using hand-crafted sets that recall '60s music videos, this horror-paranoia tells the story of Louise, a lonely – very hairy-looking – dancer, who falls for Charlie, a lookalike of her long-dead lover. The problem: those she's in-

teracts with lose their souls and lives, so to keep Charlie alive, she must resist her overwhelming emotions. The two of them are doctored with horror films, which, along with our heroine's job at a porn/erotic video store, results in heavy nods to genre cinema, as Louise surrounds herself with posters and toys from the likes of *Dawn of the Dead*, *Zombie* and *Halloween*. *Video Diary of a Lost Girl*'s special effects are also deliberately dated (sometimes intentionally cheesy) and involve a lot of superimposed static and use of garish colours, which brings to life the story's 19-year-fake, retro world. Although the movie delivers some kills and blood, as Louise sees-minded people and decapitates their bodies, the real reason to watch *Video Diary of a Lost Girl* is for the John Hughes-ish romance between two very reliable characters.



## CROSS HEADED

Adam Alvarado  
amazon.com/AdamAlvarado

Strip club dancer Heather and a nosey crew of secondary characters agree to take care of a drug exchange for a soon-to-be club owner. How-

ever, once the gang arrives at the warehouse hide-out/pad of the drug-buyer, they find him dead and the killer still on the scene. With a burrito sack over his head, reminiscent of Jason in *Friday Night 13*, the murderer proceeds to increasingly hammer most of the group into bloody mashes. Like other slashers, looks and blood take up a lot of the movie's running time, but the cliché is addressed in a scene where Heather eloquently explains that losing ticks with memories and mourning are simply more entertaining than bloody art pieces. And who can blame her for her views when the director, despite his budget, manages to make the violence and gore almost beautiful with his dark yet colourful cinematography? *Cross Headed* is a slasher that takes responsibility for its sins and has a hell of a time doing it.

## CINCO DE MAYO

Paul Rodriguez

facebook.com/AmoProductions



An interesting entry in the holiday slasher subgenre, this anxiety horror-comedy concerns a well-meaning teacher, known as El Maestro, who tries to promote tolerance of upcoming Cinco de Mayo celebrations by educating his unenthusiastic class, as well as his racist peers and neighbours, about Mexican history. His efforts get him fired and sent to a psychiatrist, who convinces him that he has a deep-seated bloodlust from his Aztec heritage. He finally snaps and goes on a murder spree, targeting the racists who have wronged him. Washed-out colours and a booming electro score by Vestro Vulture give this slasher-vibe slasher an almost authentic vintage aesthetic without resorting to too many cheap fire damage effects. The retro feel is also

helped by poppy horror host Stacie Morano, who introduces Cinco de Mayo and later pops in with a fake trailer for an obligatory film called *Dance Of the Die*, about a school dance from attacked by zombies (make that). Despite the fact that Cinco de Mayo-related hate crimes are a grim reality, this film manages to approach the subject with respect while still being goofy, tongue-in-cheek and very bloody.

## TO JENNIFER

James Collier Breneck

facebook.com/totJenniferMovie



Shot entirely on an iPhone 5, this slow-burner follows awkward college-age teen Joey, who receives a sexy text message from his long-distance girlfriend Jennifer that was meant for someone else. Upset, he recruits his pal Steven and Steven's boss, cement buddy, Martin, to take a road trip to confront Jennifer about her infidelity. They decide to record their journey, which includes small-town house parties, fist fights and hookups (Joey's warped view of lust). Although it's a rollicking trek for the other two, every event causes Joey to become increasingly agitated and desperate to see Jennifer, resulting in a bloody climax that reveals the true nature of their relationship and his sinister reasons for seeing her face-to-face. With a minuscule crew (the three stars of the film) and a singular camera (that most of us have in our pockets right now), this thriller truly shows that budget is not a factor in making a movie that keeps you engaged and offers a few surprises.

*Patrick's Blood* on a Budget column appears regularly at rue-vorpage.com.

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ RESURRECTS HIS CULT VAMPIRE FILM FOR TELEVISION WITH **FROM DUSK TILL DAWN: THE SERIES**

# Luna De Sangre

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN: THE SERIES

**F**IVE FEET UNDER MIGHT SLEEP LIKE A DUNK OF AN EYE TO A WHIPPY PETER SHAKEN GODDESS, BUT IT'S BEEN WHILE TIME FOR ROBERT RODRIGUEZ TO RETHINK HIS 1996 ACTION-HORROR STYLISH **FROM DUSK TILL DAWN**. The San Antonio-born filmmaker's third theatrical feature earned cinematic box-office receipts before it went on to become a cult favorite, spawning two direct-to-video sequels. The franchise was left in the hands of other directors (including *Del Gato* fix-a-writer Scott Spiegel) while Rodriguez went on to helm a diverse roster of high-profile features, from the family-friendly adventure flick *Spy Kids* and its three sequels, to the ultra-violent big-screen adaptation of Frank Miller's *Sin City* comic (the follow-up, co-directed by Miller and Rodriguez, hits theaters in August).

In all that time, though, Rodriguez has never stopped thinking about the Quentin Tarantino-scripted film that placed him at the front of the grad-house revival. So when it came time to develop the first original series for

Rodriguez's new television network, El Rey, the choice was obvious.

"I've always loved the original *Dusk*," he explains. "It was a great experience and there was a lot of unexplored territory in the film, such as the idea of having this vampire culture set in Mexico. There's a hint of a bigger story, with the pulchritude on the pyramid at the end and the introduction of the Salinas [Hayek] character with the snake. I wanted to do something based on the research I'd done on Aztec and Mayan mythology — blood puts that feline vampire-like — and finish the story off by taking Quentin's script, embellishing it and building a different world out of it so that we can retell the story in a way that will set us up for future seasons."

The original film starred George Clooney and Ice Cube as Seth and Richie Gecko, a pair of fugitive brothers who take up in a Mexican strip joint after a bloody crime spree. The Tidy Twister turns out to be a meat market of a different kind, though, the scantily-clad employees are shape-shifting, evil-plan vampires, and the patrons are their intended refreshments. What

begins as a crime thriller abruptly turns into a gang, FX-heavy monster show when the brothers, along with three hostages they collect along the way, are trapped inside the bar for an entire, harrowing night. It all leads up to a striking reveal: as the blooded survivors leave the bar the next morning, we see that the Tilly Twister is actually the journal of an ancient Mayan pyramid.

It's that last image that has kept the story churning at Rodriguez's imagination.

"That last shot—that the bar was built on a pyramid—wasn't in the script originally," the director says. "Dare really wasn't any consideration for that. It just happened to be set in Mexico, but it could have been anywhere, and I really wanted to bring that [Mexican identity] to it and make it feel like it was part of a culture and a mythology. So I ended on that shot, and I thought it would be [an enticing] to the audience that there's more story there."

That image was an old-school matte painting, and it's been hanging on the wall of Rodriguez's office ever since. The filmmaker says it's been a constant reminder that the original movie only scratched the surface of a potentially vast mythology.

"I would stare at it all the time, always wishing I'd done more with that," he admits. "There were so many places you could take it. And so, when this network opportunity came up, I finally wanted to put into it all these ideas I've had over the years. It felt like it had been percolating for a long time."

Many of the narrative beats in the first few episodes will be familiar to fans of the original film. Once again, the action begins at Danny's World of Liquor, where bank robbers Seth Gecko (now played by G.I. Joe: Metaknight's D.J. Cotrona) and his psychotic brother Richie (Dane Cook). The *Pinks* of thing a Hellsworn family shoot a Texas Ranger (the brothers take several hostages as they head for refuge in Mexico, disgraced monster Jacob Fisher [The X-Files' Robert Patrick], his daughter Kate [Madison Davenport, *The Possession*]) and her adopted son Scott [Brandon Soo Hoo, *Foster's Home*].

The series makes good on much of the back story that could only be hinted at in the movie's 108-minute running time.

"At the heart of it," says Rodriguez, "is this love for the characters. Quentin makes the best characters in the world. It's kind of surprising that they've never been on television. They're so exportable... You can imagine all these long lines you can follow, that become entire episodes. Like little hints in the dialogue, talking about a



*Black Pinks: The Pinks' journey leads to a D.J. Cotrona who plays Seth Gecko's brother Dane Cook's Richie. The Pinks' journey leads to a D.J. Cotrona who plays Seth Gecko's brother Dane Cook's Richie. The Pinks' journey leads to a D.J. Cotrona who plays Seth Gecko's brother Dane Cook's Richie.*

bank heist in Atlanta. Well, what does that look like? How does that inform the characters and the story? So there's still a lot of unexplored territory."

Though the inaugural season essentially makes the first half of the film, it goes in some very different directions. For instance, the story's supernatural aspects are ingrained from the beginning. Richie has developed a mysterious connection to a monstrous blood cult, and is being lured to the Tilly Twister by strange visions and voices. The series is also taking plenty of time to explore the characters' backgrounds and develop subplots: the Geckos and their travelling companions don't arrive at the bar until the final moments of the fifth episode.

"We needed a new way to get at the story that was engaging, even though it plays out in real time, and would take a small amount from the movie that would maybe be five minutes, and expand it into 45 minutes," explains Rodriguez, who directed four of the first season's first episodes. "I started thinking about it a couple of years ago. I remember telling Quentin, and he thought it was a great idea to have the whole [first] season play out from dusk 'til dawn,

in real time with flashbacks, so that you had this momentum of getting to the bar, and then building to a conclusion that's much different than the film, so that you're ready for season two and onward."

Though Tinseltown has no official role in the series, Rodriguez says his frequent collaborator has been supportive.

"He let me just run with it," Rodriguez says. "I tried to show him a couple of episodes in advance, and he was like, 'No, no, no, I want to see it when it comes on.' He sits there and watches it when it [jams] and loves seeing it that way."

The series definitely retains nearly all Tarantino's trademark writerly flourishes—witty asides, moments that border on the









WELL



*Down, Ladies And Gentlemen, introduced: Ranger Freddie González gets introduced with the red suit, wigs, props and props (Wilson Ybarra), the Fuller family (Scott Brander), Scott Brander (Scott Brander), Father Jacob (Robert Patrick), and Kate (Madison Deane) and Peter Gacko (Zoe Lister-Jones)*



edge of explosive violence — but it has done steady with the movie's manic pacing and jolting tone. Rodríguez was in his late twenties and relatively inexperienced when he directed the feature, he turns 40 this month, and, though his "You're a Star" Studios is based in Texas, he has become a formidable Hollywood player. Back in the '90s, when the famously low-budget *El Mariachi* made Rodríguez a patron saint of that decade's burgeoning indie-film boom, it probably wouldn't have been a culture of publicity to arrange a telephone interview.

From *Dark Till Dawn*, then, has matured along with its creators. That's not to say the property has become softened, or that it's lost its grisly-house aesthetic; Rodríguez and his creative team, which has also included *After Witch Project* co-director Eduardo Sánchez, keep the red stuff on top with shockcuts, stabbings, eye gouges, beatings and plenty of gushing, sporting gore. If anything, there's an edge to the violence that was less evident in '95, for instance, the series draws parallels between the methods of its monsters and the grisly activities of the drug cartels that control events in Mexico.

There's another, even more intriguing aspect of this new incarnation, the way it reflects the evolving cultural landscape of American horror. Latin audiences have become an important demographic for horror entertainment, as

evidenced by Paramount's attempt to woo Hispanic fans with *Jeepers! Paranormal Activity: The Aftermath* series. Whether or not these viewers — especially those whose parents and even grandparents were born in the U.S. — have it, will be a major factor in *Dawn's* success or failure. In a rare case of a creative property that has actually been improved upon by commercial considerations, one of the coolest aspects of the series is the addition of *Tease Ranger Freddie González* (José García), a character tailored specifically for Latino audiences.

"I felt like it needed that point of view," Rodríguez says of why he created the character. "[*El Rey*]... is a US Hispanic network. It's English-language, but it has a lot to do with the identity of second- and third-generation Hispanics who grew up in the United States and might not even speak Spanish. So I really wanted to have a character that was sort of the eyes of the network audience. Also, it's a way to keep heat on the ball of the Gacko brothers the whole time. That character's been the most fun."

To date, Freddie is as close as the show gets to a traditional protagonist. The Gacko brothers find themselves in his crosshairs when they murder his partner and mentor, Ranger Earl McGraw (Don Johnson), in the first episode. Determined to avenge McGraw, Freddie leaves his wife and infant daughter behind to pursue the brothers across the border. The young lawman, who can't stand the sight of

blood, must also contend with gruesome spectral visions of a rapist he killed in the line of duty, who shows up periodically to taunt him.

It's not just the human characters who are being fleshed out in the series. Rodríguez also hints that viewers are in for surprises regarding Santánico Pandemonium, the vampire queen played by Hays in the film and Eiza González in the series.

"She's the villain in this season for sure," he says. "It's your little girl going to the slaughter, whoever it is that's slaughtering you is the villain. But if you look at the bigger picture of the film and how it works — well, the person who does the actual slaughtering maybe isn't so bad. It's just part of what has to be done. So when you get a sense of the larger world, you'll see that she's actually a heroine in a lot of ways. But it'll be revealed later, but for now she serves the purpose of being the villain."

The first season of *From Dark Till Dawn: The Series* wrapped up last month, 18 March. It was renewed for a thirteen-episode second season (Canadian and other international viewers can get caught up on Netflix, where each episode becomes available the night after its *El Rey* Network premiere.) Rodríguez has ambitious plans for the show, and says he and his collaborators have already talked about a third, fourth and even fifth season.

If responses respond well to the series, it could also mean more original horror programming for *El Rey*. Production has already begun on the network's second original series — an espionage-themed show called *Motivator* — but Rodríguez has set his sights on a horror property he'd like to develop next.

"We haven't chosen our third series yet, but some of the things we have in mind do have horror elements," he says. "I would love to have more horror. There's one in particular that I'm keen on, and I hope it rises to the top of the development process."

WHEN IN PHILADELPHIA,  
TAKE A TRIP TO EVANS CITY'S **LIVING DEAD MUSEUM**,  
A HAVEN FOR GEORGE A. ROMERO LOVERS

# ZOMBIE TOWN, USA

by Jeff Spangler

**H**IT THE EVANS CITY EXIT ON I-76  
AND YOU ENCOUNTER A WOODEDY  
WINDING ROAD LEADING INTO A  
QUAINT PENNSYLVANIA TOWN

that happens to be around zero for the modern zombie movie.

Kevin Kline, founder and owner of Evans City's Living Dead Museum, is preserving that legacy.

"I always felt that Pittsburgh, and more specifically, was a place where someone should do something to commemorate *Night of the Living Dead*," he explains.

He took on the job and, over the past half-decade, he's gathered artifacts, props and enough paraphernalia to launch a ship and museum honoring the undead ghosts as created by George A. Romero and company back in 1968. The Living Dead Museum's raison d'être is to examine how the movie introduced the cultural phenomenon of the zombie to the masses. Previously located just outside Pittsburgh in the Monacaville Mall, home to the 1970s reggae *Dance of the Dead*, it began life as a complement of Kline's collectibles store, later as *Dance of the Dead* and the thrill of being in a bona fide filming location meant that more than were flocking to the Philadelphia suburbs as a site of passage, but Kline always felt the museum's true home was in Meadville town.

"People would come to the store for *Dance of the Dead* and then ask for directions to Evans City," he says. Meanwhile, locals finally began to embrace their love of zombie heritage, hosting a Living Dead Festival with surviving cost members.

The museum, which opened in August 2009, is now situated on the main drag of Evans City, which former attendees might recognize from Romero's *The Crazies* (1973). A two-minute drive around the corner takes you right into the Evans City cemetery where *Night's* famous opening was filmed. Although some landmarks have been upgraded, it's still easy to pick out the Kline's bookstore cluttered in front

by Doris (Judith O'Dell). For Kline, there's something particularly personal about the location.

"I was five years old when *Night* was filmed (Kline is off by nearly six bucks in the cemetery," he says, and then points to a production still from *The Crazies* on the wall of the museum. "And that's the doctor's office I used to go to as a child."

The museum itself consists of a collection of stills, posters, original props and recreations of ghosts from landmark zombie history. At the entrance is a mockup of Romero's bespectacled zombie first seen wandering around the Evans City cemetery. It's surrounded by stills from *Night of the Living Dead* and you'll encounter a timeline of zombie history with framed posters and sculpted zombie heads. The highlight of the place is an autographed "Meal of Flesh"—a lined wall with bloody handprints and signatures from a veritable who's who of zombie cinema (Romero, *Night* co-writer John Russo, *Night* co-star Krys Kahan, etc.). In addition, there's an exhibit called *From Dawn of the Dead* featuring screen-used props such as a gas mask and prosthetic limbs. Plus, there's a section dedicated to Romero's script (drawing content from the likes of *Grasshopper* and *The Crazies*) and other highlights

from zombie cinema, including a miniature home-grown Modern Tossout's with Michael Jackson's "Thriller" zombie and the undead SS from *Shock Waves*.

For those tired of killing about the exhibit, a slide table runs a continuous loop of zombie-themed documentaries. And taking up a zombie drink at the museum is a gift shop with a range of T-shirts, DVDs, books and signed paraphernalia. You can also see a piece of living dead history with a chunk of the executioner's axe in *Dawn*.

Kline is currently working to expand the museum, using materials salvaged from the original location. He's assembling no damage to the creepy chapel from *Night's* opening scene. He's also collected pieces from the J. E. Peony store featured heavily in *Dawn*, including portions of the riverboat in which the zombified Ripley is offed. Nearly forty years later, the riverboat's inner doors still reveal bullet splatter scars from Tom Savini's effects work.

"It's more or less lined up with where [Ripley actor David Emge]'s head would have been, from studying the screen guide and following the trajectory of the bullet flow," boasts Kline.

More on the Living Dead Museum at [monroevillemuseum.com](http://monroevillemuseum.com)



# MEMENTO MORGUE

ROTTEN  
FESTIVAL  
FEAR  
VALPHEGANT



AM writer-in-chief Dave Alexander with *My Bloody Valentine* (1981) director George Morikis and (clockwise) a Marvel Zombies Spider-Man



Cos (and American Mary) directors Jon and Elyse Sojka sandwich Matt King and (bottom left) American Mary co-star Trish Van Der Zee with *Witch* director Lowell Spence



The Tazmanian represents and the right *Yellow* director Andrew Brought with *Leviathan*



Robert Englund talks with fans during his panel



ROTTEN  
FESTIVAL  
FEAR



(Left to right) AM's Ron McKinley hangs with Michael Roemer (writers in *Body Parts*) at the *Body Parts* and *Body Parts* editor Monica S. Runkle with Michael Biehn



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# CINEMACABRE

FILM + DVD + REISSUES



## THE CREEPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

### ESCAPE FROM TOMORROW

Starring Roy Abramson, Elena Scheller and Karlene Rodriguez  
Written and directed by Randy Moore  
Available on DVD

It's tragic that some of the places and things that were once so magical to us as kids are actually pretty terrible. McDonald's is a haven for high fat foods, Santa Claus is just a figure used to get people into department stores and toys are sinister pieces of plastic. And thanks to alleged faxing lead on kids, causing up of eco-dumb accusations of home-planet and other incidents the biggest bummer of all is the discovery that Disneyland employed an actively kind of evil and no film in history captures this sentiment so directly as the mind-bending thriller *Escape from Tomorrow*, which was shot there in secret.

It's the White House's first day of the park and they are determined to make the most out of it. So on their way, however, dad Jim (Roy Abramson) starts having strange visions of evil forces in the *Snake World* ride, and he comes increasingly obsessed with two French teens he keeps seeing. As

Jim's day progresses, the visions continue and he begins to run into crazy characters, such as a winds on a scooter and a better ex-Duney princess, before embarking on an odyssey of paranoia, bad behavior and insanity leading to the discovery of a horrifying operation taking place inside the park.

Reminiscent of a Russian Pezinski-style descent into madness, *Escape from Tomorrow* takes you on a harrowing metaphysical ride through adult disorientation. One can't help but marvel at how the film was made and released without triggering any lawsuits. Using still cameras set to video mode to take their they were filming, the lonely misanthropic crew and crank spent days at both Disneyland and Disney World riding attractions and working in lines to get footage. As an indie production, they had the film edited in Rome, to keep it off of Disney's radar.

Although there's a slow-on given screen in parts, and scenes filled of other tourists, the majority of *Escape from Tomorrow* is not made the Magic Kingdom — an incredibly better last at indie film making. Even better, the movie is genuinely tense and effective. Such daring might inspire filmmakers to put other corporate parks on the crosshairs. If so, this was suggest something called *The Toxic Disneyland Movie*?

PATRICK DOLAN

## GLEE GONE BAD

### STAGE FRIGHT

Starring Milla Jovovich, West Leavel and Douglas Smith  
Written and directed by Jerome Roa  
Only on Entertainment

"Dorothy meets *Glee*" is the glib way to describe *Stage Fright*, a Canadian horror musical about theater camp kids being slaughtered by a masked killer. But that throwaway descriptor begs a couple of questions: 1) Is it more like the original *Scream*, which was fun, or the *Twilight* sequel? And 2) Is it like *Glee* before it started sucking?

Milla Jovovich (Die *Armed* stars as Denali Swenson, an ambitious teen whose mother (Minnie Driver) was murdered on the night of her debut as the star of a *Phantom of the Opera*-type Broadway musical. A decade later, she and her brother Buddy (Douglas Smith, *Arbitrage*) are slack working at the summer theater camp run by Roger McCall (Matt Lough, their mother's former boyfriend and producer of said Broadway musical).

Despite the tragically *Glee*-like to sing on stage, just like her mom. To outlandish the audience for the lead is Roger's remark of the latter opera, growing the wrath of a jealous rival (Mallory Lowman, *Rock* and the *Book of Eli*) and other theatrical tropes — the sleazy director with a crying coach, a talented performer's identity



crisis and the question of whether or not a high-powered facehugger insect will make it to opening night—are linked as a mislaid killer starts to come his way through the night.

Director Jerome Soler and musical writing partner ElBabine made a name for themselves among horror fans with the funny and bloody short *The Legend of Jester Dave* (2012). Here, they exhibit the same talent for combining laughs and screams, balancing energetic, campy musical numbers with gruesome kills (please, driver, connect a particularly gassy vein).

That said, Soler takes control of the film in the first 10 minutes, while Camille's confrontation with the killer is twice the apex going on relentlessly provokes swiftest laughter. Still, he does create a unique movie that pokes fun at the insular and know-it-all British sci-fi. Overall, *Stage Fright* delivers more glee than frights, and proves that not only is life a cabaret, so is death.

SEAN PLUMMER

## NO REST FOR THE WICKED

### BIG BAD WOLVES

Starring Rocco Rocco, Lisa Kishner  
and David Glickman  
Written and directed by Marvin Kishner  
and David Glickman  
Magnet

In *Animal*, adolescent girls are being kidnapped, raped and decapitated. The police are baffled, though a hitman dog named Micki (a.k.a. Adonis) is convinced the murderer is a notorious scientist/actor named Dor (Robert Kishner). Micki tries to beat a confrontation out of him, but that plan backfires when a horrified Adonis records the torture on a phone and uploads the video to YouTube. When it goes viral, Micki and Dor are both out of a job: Unemployed, divorced and social pariahs, both men are locked in conflict as Dor's innocence (or lack thereof) is the only thing either has to hold on to.

Enter Gill (Tina Goad), the father of one of the victims. He and Micki (dog dad) drag his dogs into the basement of Gill's cabin and combine the investigation, interrogations be damned. Of course, when these include unpleasant soap delivery (doggy phone calls how did it happen) and a Polesian as a hero, introducing a confusion from Dor goes far to see whether any one could have imagined.

As it turns out, *Big Bad Wolves* is a prime example of how to damage a tight little film with one twist too many. The final shot is one you'll see coming within the first 10 minutes of the nearly two-hour-long movie. Without going into spoiler territory, it simultaneously wraps everything up a little too neatly and removes the most interesting aspect of the story: making it all fall apart like the blocks in a dis-



section of *Jeep*.

But, dog dad Adonis and a broken, despite the obvious mystery. Underneath the team Adonis Kishner and Robert Kishner (Adonis) have that a film that is beautifully lit and a masterfully crafted blend of dark comedy and visual madness. It is never boring, thanks to a terrific cast and a lush score by Hans Frank. But, for those first moments.

ADAM CLARKE

## DON'T DOUBT THIS MOVIE

### THE CONSPIRACY

Starring Aaron Poole, James Gilbert and Alan C. Peterson  
Written and directed by Christopher MacKie  
Kismet Media

First-time writer/director Christopher MacKie launches new life into the well-traveled found-footage format with his highly original debut, *The Conspiracy*. Conspiracy theories and their colorful proponents may be an uncomfortable topic for contemporary horror, but MacKie did his homework and it shows. Borrowing some of the most controversial claims from the 2007 documentary *Zeitgeist: The Movie* and fusing them with a Poland-inspired tale of occult suspense, *The Conspiracy* packs a thought-provoking punch and genuine thrills and chills.

A pair of filmmakers (Aaron Poole and James Gilbert, as the *Wolves* film mentions) set out to explore conspiracy theories and those who expose them. When their primary interview subject, the eccentric occultist evangelist Terrence G. (Alan C. Peterson) goes missing, they pick up his narrative of newspaper clippings and try to pick up where he left off. Next thing they know, Aaron's apartment is ransacked and an ominous black van starts following their crew around. Unintentionally spoken yet compelling to dig deeper, the filmmakers find themselves infiltrating Terrence's occult society that will go to great lengths to preserve their secrets on the surface. It's tempting to dismiss *The Conspiracy* as another low-budget, mockumentary thriller, but MacKie's story builds suspense as

slowly and seamlessly that you don't even realize how immersed you are until the climax has you picking your jaw up off the floor. We'd like to think that we're free-to-investigate, discuss and even challenge the powers that be, and it's easy to write off conspiracy theories as scribbles with unrealistic implications and too much time on their hands, but the fact remains that most of us are too busy simply surviving our modern lives to stop and seriously consider them, which is exactly what makes the most chilling aspect of the film and the part that will stay with you long after the credits roll.

ANDREA SBRIGATI

## GLOBAL ARMING

### BLOOD GLACIER

Starring Gabriel Byrne, Dina Goldstein  
and Brigitte Orlé  
Directed by Marika Koss  
Written by Benjamin Branson  
VFX Workshop

There's something missing in the German Alps—and it's weird and played off, whatever it is. Set in a near future in which climate change has caused disaster beyond anything produced, *Blood Glacier* originally titled *The Station* is a German-made rehash of *The Thing*, screened conclusively with elements of *Alien*. The low kicks it off at an isolated research station on a rapidly melting glacier in the mountains in Germany, where a small team of scientists (compensated by their dog, which is depicted as an eerily realistic depiction of an actual substance that makes the glacier appear as though it's bleeding).

On analysis, the stuff appears to have the power to create dramatic and terrible machines in any animal that ingests it, posing an immediate danger to the researchers. However, with the arrival of a political minister (and his team) already in jeopardy, they decide to keep their discovery under wraps. But as the winter and the ice make their way across the mountains, they're attacked by a se-





...two of strange beasts – and the mutants are only just getting started.

*Blood Omen* wears its influences boldly (one of the mutants ends up lugging a character's torso, for example) but it largely succeeds in knowing naivety and one-liners to focus on the tensions between the characters and the chilling implications of the ecological disaster. The conflicting motivations of the scientists and politicians with the outpost's overgrown Janek (Christian Labadie), are made thoroughly human by skillful writing and a dedicated cast. The writer and director even need the easy cut of making the political the villain.

However, without a bad guy, crushed spaceship or evil corporation to blame for the ecological disaster that unfolds, *Blood Omen* leaves us contemplating an uncomfortable and decidedly unsettling truth as to as climate change is concerned: we are all culpable.

CLAIRE HOSWELL

## VAMPIRE VERITÉ

### AFFLICTED

Starring Derek Lee, Gil Prowse and Michael Gill  
Written and directed by Derek Lee and Gil Prowse  
R18

Found-footage horror films have had an incredibly successful run and have given us both thrills and disturbing entries that date all the way back to 1980's *Gaslight* (Halloween). But for every *Disturbing Project* (aka *Disturbing Project*) there's the inevitable glut of subpar copycats such as *The Amelie Hunting or Snow Encounters*.

*Afflicted* which falls in the "good" camp follows last friends Derek Lee and Gil Prowse (played by the writers/directors themselves) who are setting out on a trip around the world with plans to document it online. Unfortunately problems they're about to have. Derek discovers that he has a serious medical condition that could be fatal. Instead of cancelling their plans, the crazy Canucks decide to live vicariously and embark on their journey of a lifetime.

Everything is going as planned until one night as

For when Derek is attacked by a woman he picks up in a bar. At first, they think it was nothing more than a chance encounter with some crazy/bored and Derek starts to change. His inability to keep food down and his increasing intolerance to sunlight lead them to believe that they're got to track down the woman who attacked him and get some answers.

Though this could have easily been nothing more than a derivative cash grab in different disordered heads, Lee and Prowse create characters that the viewer actually cares about and consistently rock us with great special effects sequences which seem too polished for such a low budget outing. It will be incredible to see what these guys can do if someone gives them a serious budget.

Having made a splash at various festivals around the world, *Afflicted* was recently given a limited theatrical release and is now available through most video On Demand channels.

LAST CHANCE LANCE

## MORELLO, MO' PROBLEM

### HAUNT

Starring Liane Liberto, Harrison Gilbertson and Jane Slaye  
Directed by Mac Carver  
Written by Andrew Barker  
R18 Midnight

"Every ghost story begins with a house and a tragedy," says the voice-over at the beginning of *Haunt*. And with that we're dropped straight into a scabbing modern mansion afflicted with what the locals call "the Morello curse" which stems from pediatrician Janet Morello losing all three of her children and her derelict husband. Everything's fine now though suddenly and a new family is moving in the achingly charming Emily and Alan (Julie) from Skype and Brian (Winn) and their three kids Sam, Evan and Anna.

It is come as no surprise that they start asking things are a bit off, especially, director Mac Carver creates a growing atmosphere of unease in the little glimpses of mysterious figures in their peripheral vision. Paranoia changes in front of their eyes and Anna the youngest, is frequently found talking to people that no one else can see. When Evan (Harrison Gilbertson)

meets a local girl, Sam (Liane Liberto), and they discover he no longer exists in the attic, they decide to try to make friends with who lives in hanging around the house. This, as every ghost story should have told them, is a very poor idea.

*Haunt* is completely made, and contains some elements of genuine interest, as well as some very effective jump scares. For a ghost story that was based as part of a larger continuum, however, it falls down on some very basic conventions. It sets up the mystery of the house with elegance and menace, but fails to make good on its slow-burn promises. By the time the inevitable tension erupts into violence, the movie is essentially over. Few of the questions it sets up are resolved and those that are seem to be disappointing clichés. In the end, *Haunt* is a decent movie, but just flicks out, and that's a real shame.

CLAIRE HOSWELL

## THE BLOOD-RED PLANET

### THE LAST DAYS ON MARS

Starring Lee Liberto, Harrison Gilbertson and Jane Slaye  
Directed by Russell Robinson  
Written by Sydney J. Heims and Oliver Brown  
Majors

While *NASA's* roots are patterning around on Mars looking for signs of life, many a genre fan has already been to the Red Planet and knows just how looking scary it can be. Whether it's the genetic mutations and chemical risks via factory of *Schindler's* *Revenge* or *Star Trek* at the huge worm-like sand worms of *Alien* to Mars this is one place to leave off your vacation itinerary.

Set in a science lab somewhere on the Red Planet, *The Last Days on Mars* follows a multinational crew of scientists and technicians who are about to head back to Earth after wrapping up a six-month tour of drilling core samples and maintaining the weather.

With less than a day to go, one of them makes an incredible discovery at an excavation site, but is killed after a machine goes up and he falls to his death. Though only get worse when his missing body shows up hanging on the exterior hatch at the space lab a few hours later.

Surprisingly, this is director Russell Robinson's first feature-length film. It's an accomplished outing in which he bravely presents a poetic vision of the vast Martian environment, then deftly juxtaposes that stoic with the anthropic conflict, claustrophobic tension and cramped quarters of the astronauts' observation all while making us constantly aware of the horrors that lie in wait outside.

The ensemble cast, led by veteran Canadian actor Elias Koteas (Schrader in *Dead Calm*), gives unbelievable people in peril without relying on victim stereotypes. The standout performance, however, comes courtesy of



Law Schröder (Ringo Starr), who portrays a man desperately trying to keep everyone and everything together while falling apart himself.

Whether you're a fan of sci-fi horror or not, there are enough sleek set pieces, aggressive stunts and thrilling scenes to please even those who have already had their passports stamped by a Martian alien agent. This one is worth the trip.

LAST DANCE LANCE

## DRIVEN INSANE

### IN FEAR

Starring Ben Barnes, Alice Englert and Allen Leech  
Written and directed by Jimmy Lowery  
Anchor Bay

We've all been on roadtrips where everyone in the car wants to kill each other, but having everyone else along the road trying to actually kill you is a whole other story. Tom (Ben Barnes) and Lucy (Alice Englert) have started dating and are heading to a quaint inn off the beaten path. Their romantic plans go pear-shaped when someone (or is it more than one?) begins terrorizing them as soon as they get off of the highway. Later, they encounter Max (Allen Leech of *Governeur Abbey*), who claims to have been injured by the same person who's after them, which brings up the possibility that it's a stalker Tom angered at a local pub. However, evidence suggests the aggressor is just a psychopath who's screwing with them for the thrill of it.

Sound familiar? The movie will feel that way to anyone who has seen its *Straw Dogs* or that perennial C Thomas Howell and Rutger Hauer favorite *The Hitcher*. That's not to say that it's a derivative, though. Rather, it displays a thorough knowledge of, and fondness for, the techniques that come before it without relying on that history too much to give us a good scare.

Director Jimmy Lowery (who's also credited with the films *Johnny*, though there is no screenplay, as his technique was to film in sequence and keep the actors in the dark about the story so he could genuinely terrify them) cut his teeth directing episodes of everything from comedy shows to popular procedural series, such as the mega-hit *MI-5* (shown in distributive England as *Spooks*). If there's one thing that particularly sticks out in his feature-length directorial debut, it's his talent for mickering up the tension.

Lowery offers a refreshing counterpart to the familiar territory of rural stalk-and-slash brutality in most (justified North American) horror films. Where many directors would approach the cat-and-mouse game between the young couple and their stalker with increasing badassery and gore, he keeps things quiet and ambiguous, proving himself smart enough to know that the dread of a lurking threat is far more frightening than the shock of violence.

ADAM CLARK



## OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE SHARKS THE JUMP

NOT A GRAIN OF YOUTH



### SAND SHARKS

VHS Film

"So ichophobia" is defined as the fear of sharks, and while it's been around for a long time, back in 1995 Jaws made it a cultural phenomenon, causing us to think twice before entering ocean lakes, pools and, for some, even the bathtub! Ironically, a Jaws spoof, *Sand Sharks* is set in a remote seaside town where the sheriff has closed the beaches just before a spring break festival due to a rash of unexplained deaths involving piranha-like sharks that eat, um, swim through sand. It stars Brooke Hogan, the daughter of Hulk, as the marine biologist

he had determined to stop the rampaging fish. This is a fun film that thankfully never takes itself too seriously. Now, tell me, is there a time for fear of the beach?

BODY COUNT: 20  
SHARK COUNT: 12

### BLOOD FLOOD



### SHARKNADO

The Anytoms

The pairing of the Bytts Channel and The Anytoms really is the perfect storm of shapeliness, nerdiness and low-budget demented. Speaking of perfect storms, *Sharknado* is exactly what it sounds like: a movie about a tornado that dumps live sharks on the obviously unsuspecting population of Los Angeles. The tale follows a group of survivors trying to make their way through the flooded city while battling hordes of horribly rendered CG sharks with everything from a pool toy to a chainsaw. Though it sounds fun, the flick is dragged down by tacky acting,

a pitiful body count, wicker that changes drastically from sea urchins to the heart and sharks that are about as scary as a fish-e-fish with yaks for a snack.

BODY COUNT: 15  
SHARK COUNT: 425

### BUBBLY BROODS



### 2-HEADED SHARK ATTACK

The Anytoms

Just when I thought it was safe to check out another shark-themed movie, I came across this flick from The Anytoms, who I'm certain will be making Abraham Lincoln Sharknadoes some time soon after showing us examples of sea water-squirrels getting marched, in the picks up as the two-headed behemoth attacks a ship full of blow-up sex dolls out exploring the ocean, keeping them with a nearby island, where it finds these one by one. Loaded with more blood, boobs and babes, this the other two-headed combined, it features *Baywatch* alum Cameron Duce and Brooke Hogan (again) as a sharky who blithely shanks bikini babes. But don't even think about watching these three movies, one thing's for sure -- we're gonna need a bigger lifeboat.

BODY COUNT: 26  
SHARK COUNT: 2

LAST DANCE LANCE



## REISSUES



## SLEEPER HIT

PATRICK (1978) *Replay/DVD*

Starring Susan Penhaligon, Robert Helpmann  
and Robert Thompson  
Directed by Richard Franklin  
Written by Everett De Rubeis  
Screenplay by

Though the Australians started making genre films in the early '70s, it really wasn't until the latter part of the decade that their homegrown horror

cinema really hit its stride with projects such as Richard Franklin's stylish, suspenseful *Patrick*.

Mixing its Blu-ray debut courtesy of Severin, the 1978 film features a recently departed woman named Kathy Jacques (Susan Penhaligon), who applies for a nursing position at a small, grisly-but-hospital-sized by the clinic's physicians, Dr. Roger (Robert Helpmann). Her duties include taking care of a young comatose patient named Patrick (Robert Thompson), who was brought to the facility three years earlier after encapsulating his mother and her lover. Showing no brain activity and kept alive through a ventilator, the young man exhibits few signs of life at first.

It soon becomes apparent that he is able to perform acts of psychokinetic—including moving objects and making the windows in his room open on their own. When Kathy pays attention to other men—her husband Ed (Ian Mollner)—and a surgeon—silly “accidents” start to happen. And when Dr. Roger and the clinic's head nurse, Morton Cassidy (Julia Blake), try to terminate Patrick's odd, psychic misbehavior.

Playing tribute to his director's best, Alfred Hitchcock, the late Franklin—who would go on to helm such classics as *Dead Games* (1983) and *Psycho II* (1983)—imbells his film with several Hitchcockian touches (the hospital's entrance, for example, is clearly inspired by the one in the Bates' house), and Australian composer Lynne May's fantastic score sounds like something Bernard Herrmann would have composed. Although there is little violence or blood splines, there are a couple of truly gruesome scenes that linger.

Severin Films' two-disc Blu-ray/DVD combo pack features a fantastic HD transfer and is packed with extras including audio commentaries, interviews (powered from the 2005 documentary *Nor Outha Hollywood: The Wild, Uncut Story of Exploitation's Frank Franklin*, recently deceased screenwriter Everett De Rubeis, producer Antony Dianno, Penhaligon

and Mollner, a vintage documentary on Franklin's work, a trailer and TV ads. There's never been a better time to discover *Exploitation*.

JAMES SPILL

## SWEATING BLOOD

DEATH SPA (1989) *Replay/DVD*

Starring William Bantiller, Ron Fosse and Everett Patrick  
Directed by Michel Pinault  
Written by Ulrich Parslow and James Earl Pratt  
MPV

Of the fads that came to define American pop culture in the 1980s, perhaps none was more onerous to satire than the fitness craze. Inspired by the culturally tempting imitations of Oliver Newton-John, fitness culture came into its own during the decade. Boasting the nineties with shows that seemed to be more exercise-themed erotica than actual workouts. Of course, the time necessary to dedicate oneself to fitness tapes or pay expensive gym fees meant that many of its adherents were

the wealthy, or, as they were known in '80s: Since that class was one of fewer a prime target for slaying and slicing, *Death Spa* makes perfect sense.

Although there's a very basic concept at its core—killing gymlines with fitness equipment—the film manages to transcend standard slasher fare by going straight for the surreal. After bawling herself to death, Catherine (Debbie Cate's Short Shortcut) returns from the dead to haunt her husband Michael's (William Bantiller) exclusive gym, where everything from the weight machines to the food processors are controlled by a NASA-grade supercomputer. Deliriously there to get Michael to join her in the afterlife, she bosses herself by possessing her obnoxious brother (Morris Butcher) and including the gym equipment to kill semi-naked people in a variety of graphic and over-the-top ways that walk a fine line between shockingly bloody and laugh-inducing.

If no means a cult classic, *Death Spa* probably went more known for its oblique titles, which popped up at the beginning of many in early-'80s VHS tape. With the release of MPV's Blu-ray (showing a commentary and making all features), new generations of fans can join those who grew up wondering what in the world they were seeing in those parlors. Children of the '80s and the adolescents who still be pleased: *Death Spa* is perhaps the last true slasher of their morbid decade, and the body count rises amidst a backdrop of soft neon lighting, piles of synth and a pinpoints of MTV-era topical humor (a gym rat shoots down a guy by using her "Y'm Bats, ya're W's"). Strap on your headband and pop some '80s funk with your Walkman. *Death Spa* is guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping.

FRYDSON FASSEL



## FEVER FOR THE FLAMOUR

THIRST 1979a *Energy* 124C

Starring (Clockwise From Top Left): David Bernadine  
and Henry Silva  
Directed by Rod Hardy  
Written by John Paine  
Genre: Crime

If you needed yet more proof that the '70s were a Golden Age for horror, look your teeth into Australian cult of vampires film *Therapy*. In it, Kate Chantal Contino is kidnapped by a group of character actors ex-vampires (all of whom worship Clarendon Bulfinch). The group - among them Brisbane-based *Dracula* Dennis Hemmings, Henry Selig and Patrick Howard, Robert Thompson - believes her to be a direct descendant of Bulfinch and subjects her to a series of weird rituals, such as making her shower in blood, before forcing her to take his likeness - anything to give this "vampire" her third look. What results is a movie that is more like a misanthropic *Dr. Chomsky* with Hammer. With its chosen, Expressionist look and its very bit of creative and suggestive as *Caprice Komorov* *Chomsky* *Dracula*.

In terms of special features, the two takes at Denzelle don't let us down. The required theatrical trailer is included along with three TV spots. There's also a bonus commentary with producers/Talbotville king Anthony J. Gennaro and director Rod Hardy. It's a great, amusing chat that offers a few interesting bits of trivia about the film's production. Apparently, the vampire cult classic was originally offered to a young George Miller, but fate intervened and Miller would make his feature-length directorial debut that same year with a little film called *Mad Max*.

The real highlight of the special features is the inclusion of an isolated audio track containing the complete scores by Brian May (he lets the composer and the still-living Queen guitarist/producer May be best known for his scores to many exploitation classics, such as the first two *Alien* films, *Patrick Yilm* for the *Nordsee* Zepher, as well as American genre flicks including *Friday's Child*). The *First Night* score is like score for *Thelma Houston* some terrific work from the underrated composer. Whether it's through simple piano, conventional orchestral instrumentation. The light jazz and funk guitar. May a music in other instances of Bob Cole's baroque compositions for Dan Curtis' *Twilight Zone*. For those who don't have a copy of *Thelma* set 1988 CD pressing, this audio track is the only way to enjoy the eclectic and playful

ADAM C. ABST

## HERZOGULA

## MOSEFRATU THE VAMPIRE (1979)

Written by: **Walter Newman**  
 Starring: **Isabelle Adjani, Klaus Kinski and Bruce Campbell**  
 Written and Directed by: **Werner Herzog**  
 Screenplay by: **Walter Newman**

<sup>1</sup> "Grad is when you can't do even if you want to." Such is the misfortune of Klaus Kinski's title character.

In Werner Herzog's celebrated reedition of FW Murnau's classic 1922 *Night of the Living Dead*, in Herzog's *Blackout* Kinski's vampire brings plague wherever he goes and later, after the suspicious Isabelle Adjani, the only person other than the undead

included on Screen Factory's release of this art-house horror favorite are two commentaries with the famed director, one in English and one in German (with subtitles). As is often the case with Kiarostami, he addresses many of the things he speaks of with great affection, such as the low-budget "movie magic" used to depict the plagues of rats — the crew acquired 1130 white rats as cheaply as possible and dyed the rodents grey for their film.

From the commentators, you'll also learn that Kinski was a dick in just about everyone he met (except his superior), and that Herzog doesn't consider his *Nosferatu* to be a remake so much as a separate but connected riff on the same material. The tracks are a great complement to the film, which was shot in two languages, but unless you're absolutely starving for more Herzog, you'll find a lot of it superfluous.

Another pleasant addition is a 1979 documentary *The Making of Boudou* (also directed by Herzog) which not only amounts to filler, but weirdly contains filler-sometimes. Alongside the typical archival footage, there's plenty of one-on-one time with the director. Again, this is where Herzog really shines, offering candidly how *you* must like the one where he notes that his films come, and come from his wildest imagination. It's *his* idea when he says it.

ADAM CLARKE

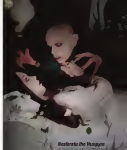
## THE TRASH MEN COMET

THE JEKYLL AND HYDE  
PORTFOLIO (1971) <sup>100</sup>

Directed by Eric Jeffrey Holm  
Written by Gene Green and Ronald Jean  
Hilbert Zerkow

Picking up where *Something Word Wide* left off, DVD hostess Isabel Yeager Sydeman has been writing the real history of lust or otherwise forgotten (or not) sexualization and porn films. While not up to the standards of some of her other acquisitions, their new presentation of Eric Jeffrey Haines' *The Jolly and Hyde Portals* shines a light on this cheapie curio of '78. Stay close and shock that will delight most female, but those who are sensitive to their heads.

A pretty standard exploitation affair (with a few lurk delinquents) set in yet sick London, the movie features extended nude pawing scenes interspersed with killings even in gaudy stage blood. Dr. Conata (Jonathan Demme) owns a nursing academy in which he seductively transforms the young students, forcing them to focus undividedly on their uniforms. When



not having teacherly traits: the girls are busy preening to get on a playset. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: until a new teacher shows up. One illustration is downright out of place with a pickback and some there is a ball of female bedrobs with three clothe puncture marks in their abdomens. The seemingly uncorrupted Catherine assigned to the class [Doris Greco] keeps getting detected by peeping in on the revaloudracking. It culminates in some light SSM for her in a bath and one of the most unconvincing disguised we find this role of Andy Malcom in *Sue the Med Monk*. Most of the girls comes from a high school science teacher while teacher Dr.

[illegible]

No one would mistake the hint for a regressive production, but Venerge Systems knows that well enough – the DVD, which pairs the scores with Maxine Tavel's sex-fueled *A Glimmer of Hope*, doesn't promise anything more than what you get. The Jekyll and Hyde Paradox is a gloriously tacky obscurity that will appeal to the broadly degenerate fans of regional junk filmmaking... like me.

# THE LATE-NITE ARCHIVE

FILE *I Ain't Got No Body*

By Paul Conroy

Genre film in the 1950s wasn't just about nuclear panic and the space race. Bubbling forth from studio backlots and poverty row came a strange spate of films about living, talking or otherwise, magical disembodied heads. Will Coward's *The Thing That Couldn't Die* (1958) — not to be confused with the apparently more shabby *The Brain That Wouldn't Die* (1962) — is one of the premiere examples of the short-lived fad that provided a startlingly literal example of the "mind-body split" first posited by 17th-century philosopher René Descartes. Descartes' ideas about the stark disparity between the tangible (your body) and the intangible (your thoughts and consciousness) and how these two elements interrelated had been accepted for centuries but were rigorously scholastic during the 1950s.

This Universal-International Pictures B-programmer, which had the good fortune of being the second-billed film after Hammer's popular *Dracula* (1958), makes its home video debut in less-than-ideal terms for posterity. It's featured as one of the rarer titles on Shout! Factory's *Monstrosity Science Theater 3000* Volume 3000 set, along with *Alucard* and *The Creature Woman* (1961), *The Puppeteer* (1963) and *Colored Blood* (1957).

In the film, disavowed teen Jessica (Carolyn Kearney) is condemned a strange, 400-year-old copper box is buried underneath a ranch owned by her Aunt Flavia (Peggy Connel). She digs it up with the help of her fiancé, Boyd (James Anderson), and nastily challenged handyman Mike (Charles Harnett). Jessica and Flavia are hooked by a curse etched into the ceiling that warns them against breaking the lock, but Boyd tricks Mike into cracking it open. Their hopes for ancient treasure are dashed when they discover the box holds the head of Gideon Drew (Robin Hagopian), one of Sir Francis Drake's sailors executed for witchcraft, which awakens and unleashes its apocalyptic hypnosis powers.



It's a great setup, and *The Thing That Couldn't Die* was among the first horror films to separate these two essential elements of human life in a searing direct reference to Descartes. Other films followed, including the aforementioned *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, *The Headless Ghost* (1958), *The Living Aldead* (1958) and *The Head* (1959). Perhaps most notable, or at least most bizarre, was *The Man Without a Body* (1957), which has a man buy a headless man's severed head so he can have the prophet's brain implanted in place of his own. This idea also seemed to manifest in a handful of flying saucer brain movies, such as *Head Without a Face* (1958) and *The Brain from Planet Amos* (1957).

Many of these films actually improved on the formula set out here, as *The Thing That Couldn't Die* almost entirely gets bogged down in subplots. Despite a handful of fun scenes, there's some exhausting business about Jessica's lost watch meant to prove her mental abilities, and a weird aside about winter depression. Then there's a lot of back and forth between Gideon and Mike to tell Boyd is a grand plan to force everyone to dig up the headless body to get reacquainted, at which

point he would be verily antipathetic.

Almost all of these films in *The Thing That Couldn't Die* timely turn on successfully bridging the mind-body gap by reuniting heads with bodies (both original and new). Not surprisingly, scientists at the time were putting Descartes' philosophical theories to the test with real scientific principles and lab experiments. The decade gave rise to investigations about how the mind could affect the body in psychosomatic disorders, psychosurgery, advances in behaviorism, and even the development of "mind-brain identity theory," which equated mental states with brain states. Suddenly, the dividing line between the body and the mind was not so clear-cut, and it was increasingly apparent that human thought could affect physical states and vice versa.

Even when they aren't great examples of storytelling, the best horror films are perfect reflections of the anxieties of their era. Though the living head and headless body has been a horror mainstay ever since *Ishtar*, *Cosmo* took a late-night stroll through *Sleepy Hollow*, *The Thing That Couldn't Die* and its scientific-minded followers took revulsionism — and philosophically scary — ideas of the time and embodied them in these tales of angry sleep-deprived corpses. In the very horror film really can help us tackle our fears, in this case, by confronting their head on... and off. **B**





# CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT



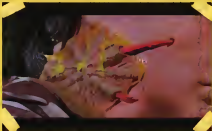
DRIVE-INS, DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

When The Moon-Man Hits Your Eye With A...  
by John W. Bowen

**K**now what really sucks about waiting for *Rise Against*? Um... well, nothing I can think of, really. But one endless source of frustration for me personally is having to respond to the inevitable question, "So, who's new and exciting in the world of horror films? Can you recommend anything?"

The answer is usually no. This isn't out of snobbishness (well, most of the time) but because of my various preoccupations. I rarely ever see the new stuff these days (not after it goes to home vid). The upside, I guess, is that I generally don't have to suffer that insufferable or miserable sitting through subgenres that bore me to tears of blood (I'm talking about comic book adaptations, video game spin-offs, sexy vampires, zombies or found footage [Chernobyl from *Bowen's Basement* is *RWAF* 4.5 being one exception, but the only one]).

If, on the other hand, someone were to ask me "What are your picks for cheap-as-backwoods-puny-humans-versus-monsters stuff that might make a good double bill with *Dan Oakes*'s *Nightbeast*?" Oh, and it'd be a nice bonus if the space-badass weapon of choice was a kind of ninja throwing star (like that looked like a really shitty mini-gizmo?) I wouldn't even have to tell of over before recommending 1980's *Without Warning*, a.k.a. *Alien Warning*, it *Come Without Warning*, *Alien Shock* and *The Best Filler Dole Decker* (Never Made Okay I realize that last one, up, but it works better than any of those others). More importantly, it's finally coming to Blu-ray and DVD this August from the darling folks at Screen Pickery. (Of, afterwards, it's available on YouTube now, under the title *It Came Without Warning*, if you simply can't wait to



gawk at those little pizzas in action, sticking, pulsating, bubbling and leaking slime in standard 80s creature-feature fashion.)

Set somewhere in Rural, USA (yeah, it's a real place like Springfield), various Unsuspecting Types — beheading father and son on hunting trip, hot young rabbits on weekend getaway with daughty papa — a secret troop — a gaggle of local hicks — bathe go about their business unaware that a butt-ugly, balloon-headed alien (you know, the type from classic sci-fi such as *Solar Wind*, *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* with poorly pinched faces, fabulous robes and a distinct lack of torso movement, as if they were wearing, um, really awkward costumes) is stalking them with the aforementioned projectiles. Only traumatized army vet Serge (Marin Landau) knows what's happening, but as anyone (gotta believe his crazy ass before it's too late?)

Directed by Erydon Clark, who's just all that known for *Satan's Cheerleaders* (1977), *The Return* (1980) and *Wacko* (1982) (it also boasts one

of the all-time B-to-Z dream team casts including — aside from the aforementioned Landau — Jack Palance, Neill Brand (*Escape Alive*), Lynn Thel (*Yours Truly From the Deep*), Cameron Mitchell (*Blood and Black Lace*), Ralph Meeker (*Kiss Me Deadly*) and Larry Storch (looking near everything *AND Love Boyz*). Even a particularly gawky-looking David Caruso is in there, though at no time does he put on a pair of sunglasses as "Wart! Get Frenched Again!" banter onto the soundtrack — sorry. That cast alone is enough to cause the old basement windows to steam up. (Or is that my laundry?)

The vastly overrated *Prehensile* (yes, you heard that right, bee-yatch!) is generally the go-to choice for this type of thing, but I'll take this 10-11. You'd be any day is it a better movie than *Prehensile*? On most levels, no. But is it a better bed movie? Oh fuck yeah. And 'round these parts, I don't have to tell you that's what bloody well counts.

And okay, fine, maybe the title sounds like an educational film about oscilloscope dysfunction, but period for flying projectiles pound *Without Warning* is both filler and killer. And don't forget, towers, I've got me a microwave and a box of so-nice frame mini-pizzas with your name on it, so you'd best turn tail and get the hell out of my basement. ☹



Clark Rogers and  
Matthew Roberts  
Image Studios

Richard Corben  
Dark Horse

Pat O'Connell, Tony Bennett and  
Andrew Nguyen  
Zinehouse

Heidi Macdonald, Grace  
Ellis and Brooke Allen  
2000 AD

Brian Green and  
Thomas Kucharski  
Zinehouse

Mark Robert  
and Jeff Zelenow  
Image

# BLEED IN FOUR COLOURS

by PEDRO CARREZUELO

**Y**ou may have learned about Lewis and Clark's 1804 expedition across the United States in history class, but chances are you never heard about their battles with rainforests, giant zombies and other assorted monstrosities. Now, thanks to *Manifest Destiny*, the twisted truth can finally be revealed.

Bleeding real-life historical events with horror elements is hardly a new idea, in recent years we've seen a number of these fusions both on the page and on the screen. Ironically, though, it was this very oversaturation that inspired writer Chris Dingess.

"I was hanging out and drinking with friends, complaining about the popular story device of taking historical figures, both factual and fictional, and combining them with monsters and creatures," he reveals. "Then I yelled out, 'You could just take Lewis and Clark and say that they were actually hunting monsters!' Then I realized that might be a fun idea that I could capitalize on."

In the opening story arc, Lewis and Clark embark on their mission, leading the rigging (and somewhat mostly dubious) Corps of Discovery across America's wilderness. Along the way they encounter French-Canadian explorer Toussaint Chabonneau and his wife Sacagawea, a collection of hybrid animal-men, led by a monster-like creature with the head of a buffalo, and a deadly illness that turns people into mindless ghost monsters.

Dingess is no stranger to horror having written for television shows such as *Reaper* and *Being Human*. He counts *Halloween*, *Night of the Living Dead* and *Let's Scare Jessica to Death* as important influences that taught him the value of setting the mood and a proper, creepy atmosphere.

"A big part of the horror for me comes from the claustrophobia of it all," he notes. "In the first arc we have them stuck in a empty fort with nowhere to run. The thought of death waiting outside a gate always taps a button in me. We also plan to show

that even when the crew is safe, they're still stuck on a boat and not the mercy of the elements like wind and water." Also less the great horror of the wilderness: how you can be in the great, open outdoors and still feel like something terrible is constantly closing in on you."

In *Manifest Destiny*, the things closing in on our group of heroes take many forms, including bees and bears, beautifully brought to life by artist Matthew Roberts. Roberts clearly had a great time designing the various creatures emerging from the forests, creating an impressive menagerie of monsters that look decidedly deadly, even though not everything is what it appears to be.

"Not all of them are designed to be purely scary," explains Dingess. "The Buffalo-men were supposed to be loathsome. However, we also wanted the first creature the Corps of Discovery encounter to be beautiful and majestic... and then the Corps panic, blow [it] away and make an enemy for life."

Particularly nasty are the Wicked Flies, an infection that turns people into much-excruciated mockeries of human life, endlessly spreading the plague. It's a nice take on the zombie genre, by way of the *Trifids* and *Body Snatchers*.

"It's a big tin of Swamp Thing and the movie *Cape Fear*," says Dingess. "There's the segment where Leslie Nielsen burns Ted Danson and Taylor Neils up to their heads and sets the tide down them. Later they come to him—they're zombies covered in seaweed and all sorts of crap. That image terrified me when I was a little kid and stuck with me. Maybe that was a chance to get it out of my system."

Glancing at the grotesque imagery of the ghost



*Manifest Destiny: The expedition encounters an infected man*

zombies it's easy to conclude that Roberts was also perhaps getting something out of his system. While the art is high quality throughout the book, the sequences with the Flies he outshines the other pages, with the artist clearly relishing every detail of a gutting copious amounts of blood with plentiful showers of green ooze.

Unfortunately for Lewis and Clark, Buffalo-men and Flies are merely the first obstacles they will encounter on their historic journey, as Dingess promises plenty more horrors to come.

"We got some monsters in the water, on the land and even within the Corps of Discovery itself."

*Manifest Destiny* Volume 1, reprinting the first six issues, is on sale now!

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Finally, more fantastic Poe adaptations from Rickard Corben, this time covering the titular "Barnes" as well as "The Cask of Amantillado," both bundled under the title *Edgar Allan Poe & The Procedure Barnes*. Of the two, "Cask" is somewhat messier and truer to Poe's original story, offering a more traditional narrative as the sinister Montresor lures the hapless Madame Foranada into his plot to reveal the tale of her missing husband, "Barnes," on the other hand, takes on more of a dreamlike structure, as a gentleman named Lucien has recurring visions—illustrated via particularly Finnish artwork—of being buried alive. Both tales brilliantly display Corben's expertise at bringing Poe's stories to life in all their macabre glory. The ongoing series continues to represent some of the best comics published in recent years.

**Professor Van Helsing's** daughter, Liesel, has been hurtled forward in time from the 1800s to present-day New York, where she continues her vampire-slaying ways—an interesting premise for Zenescope's *Gravest Filly Tales Presents: Helsing*.



There, she mysteriously receives a journal written by her late father, telling of his encounter with a vampire impervious to the old wooden-stake-through-the-heart bit. Looking for answers, Liesel heads to Rome and the stage is set for the eventual monster showdown. *Helsing* is not a particularly extraordinary comic, but it accomplishes what it sets out to do: Liesel is a likable protagonist, though in true Zenescope style, her outfit is not exactly practical. Still, the art is pleasant and not just exploitive and the story moves along at a good pace, adeptly introducing the characters and plot. A fun read but little more.

**At an all-girl summer camp,** a group of five friends band together to explore, scoundrels their counselor had, oh, fight off a pack of three-eyed wolves. *Lumberjanes* is one of the first titles to be released under BOOM's new Epic imprint, meant to spotlight more experimental books, and at first glance this certainly seems to fit the bill. It's a bit difficult to get a handle on

where the story is going, though the off-the-wall, humorous tone implies there'll be a light touch to the more supernatural and gristier aspects. Brooks Allen has done a great job on the art, infusing the book with a sense of fun and adventure, while giving each girl a distinct look, making it easier to introduce the reader to the relatively large cast. Well worth a peek if you're on the prowl for something different.



**Still hoping to find a cure** for his father's possession, Willie Howard, his Otis-like pet Spot, and their friend Constable Smith race to the Antarctic, seeking the help of the notorious Dr. Herbert West. Once there, however, they discover that Dr. West has unwittingly unleashed an army of monsters, giant killer penguins and a legendary Old One. Though *Howard Lovecraft and the Kingdom of Madness* lacks some of the adventurous tone of the previous two installments, this third chapter nevertheless feels closer to Lovecraft's world with its surplus of creatures and the same what-dork-touls-the-characters-travel. Bruce Brown has written a story that will appeal to younger readers—without pulling any punches



—making it a worthy and emotional read for adults as well. Thomas Beatty's art perfectly captures the wide-eyed sense of wonder without sacrificing the more disturbing and alienating aspects of the story's setting.

**The best zombie stories** are the ones that showcase just how terrible human beings can be to each other, in addition to critiquing the atrocities

perpetrated by the living dead. This is something that Mark Katwell and Jeff Zornow understand well and it's a key ingredient to the '68 series (*RAW* #46) in *68—Rule of War*, CIA Special Agent Dedon Rule is in zombie-infested Cambodia on the hunt for a sloven neurosurgeon who has carried out a number of grisly experiments on POWs and who he believes knows the fate of his soldier son. Meanwhile Private Kuen Yan leads a small band of survivors as a desperate mission to return to America, little knowing the horrors that await them there. The action is fast and the gore is copious. Though the war in Vietnam appears to be wrapping up, we get enough of a glimpse of the homeland to know the nastiest stuff is yet to come.



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# NINTH CIRCLE

BOOKS

## SHEER FILTH

David Flint, ed.  
FAB Press

A mix of trash, porn and boundary-testing alt culture of an era, *Sheer Filth* collects rare issues of the titular 1980s UK zine that, if nothing else, remain an unforgetting time capsule. While it's quite well written, the book's main pleasure may be inadvertent, as it shines a light on how far horror and exploitation film culture has evolved in the last twenty years. In an era where you can get Blu-rays of one-time obscenities such as *Faces of Death* shipped to your doorstep tomorrow, breathless articles about Ed Wood, Linna Quigley and festival reports on Brian Yuzna's *Society* seem quaint by modern standards.

Through editor and main contributor David Flint, we learn exactly how much ground at the time, today it's a path well-trod.

There are several good pieces included, though the accolades tip more towards sex than horror. Features on Belle Page, Anne Sprinkle, the Marques de Sade and the films of Jayne Mansfield and porn star Cicciolina hardly outnumber the genre retrospectives, which include things like *Warrior of Party Beach* and Wood's then rarely-seen *Copy of the Dead* and *Salon Kitty*. There are interviews with the usual suspects – video freak Johnny Legend, exploitation master Dave Friedman, American International Pictures honcho Sam Arkoff, H.G. Lewis (just two quarters only and more – but, as with some of the other material, they have diminished in value since originally printed). The events covered in Flint's Friedman article, for example, are better told in Friedman's then-unpublished autobiography.

Similarly, the collected music and book reviews might have been dropped altogether. Throwing all the "classic" reviews into one huge section makes for laborious reading. The film reviews are still interesting, but the value of reading about forgotten vinyl garage rock comps or '60s smut paperbacks such as *Nymphs Subjugation* is debatable.

What's most interesting about *Sheer Filth* is recalling how difficult it was to get your hands on some of the material before the Internet. And this spirit lives on in some of the book's still-topical articles that look at the films of Frank Hamelster associate Art Kousinoff and include a conversation with '70s slasher auteur Norman J. Warren (*Satan's Slave*). A nice companion piece to *Headpress'* horror zine overview *Shore Drive*, *Sheer Filth* helps lay out the history of genre film journalism in a frequently interesting way, even if we've since surpassed the cultural outposts within.

PAUL CORPUS

## ANA KAI TANGATA

Scott Nicolay  
Fetters & Sinner

The title may not mean much to you, unless you speak the Rapa Nui language, in which it means something like "caves that eat men." The author's name may also not mean much to you unless you read *The Golemarche's Puppet* (see RAMP122), a collection in which his story "Eyes Exchange Bank" was one of the very best. But this will change, because *Ana Kai Tangata* is the best debut collection in memory and Scott Nicolay is the strongest voice to appear in horror fiction since Lord Dunsen (RAMP132). It is only fitting, then, that Barron wrote the introduction for this book, while the afterword comes from noted genre anthropologist John Polak.

All the stories in the beautifully designed *Ana Kai Tangata* are augmented by semi-distant art from David Verba. Of the tales themselves, there's not a single weakling in the bunch. All are above average, with very vivid, cinematic images that drip with atmosphere. The sense of place is especially strong: readers are certain to be haunted by the abandoned quarry that attracts the protagonist of "alligators," the safari love coming to naught in "Eyes Exchange Bank," the Indian reservation's case with rot-to-dead archeological finds in

"Phragmites," the unwholesome swamp of "The Soft Frogs," the decrepit San Francisco tenement building in "Geschichte" and, certainly by the over-mysterious Easter Island, which is the setting for the titular tale.

It helps that most of the stories are novella/novella-sized, allowing sufficient space to build memorable mood. Nicolay – a poet, sewer and archaeologist – has been around, he knows the strange, dark places intimately enough to transport you. And let's not forget the short novel included in these 350 pages – *Lucifer* is a delicious pulp detective story with body-melting amorphous creatures, and it contains a hilarious autopsy room scene certain to make you either vomit or laugh in disbelief at how insanely gruesome it is. Equally adept in creeping you out as in grossing you out, Nicolay's collection is a stunning book that deserves the attention of all literary horror devotees.

DELAN DONLIJANOV

## THE HORROR SHOW GUIDE: THE ULTIMATE FRIGHTFEST OF MOVIES

Mike Mayo  
Necosis Ink Press

Mike Mayo's *Horror Show Guide* is like Leonard Maltin's annual book of capsule reviews, albeit with a narrower focus. Unfortunately, Mayo reviews too many non-horror films, including *Catwoman*, *Boyz n the City*, *Ed Wood*, *Così* and the *Royal Joke*. *Adolescents* (family movies, yep) doesn't even try to make a case for why he thinks they belong here. Meanwhile, he omits plenty of unambiguous horror films such as *Puppet Master*, *Guillermo* and all of their respective sequels. Worse, he proposes this newly revised edition with lists such as the "Top 13 Literary Adaptations" or "Top 13 Surprising Sequels," which don't have much value when he refuses to delve into why those films are noteworthy.

These issues are symptomatic of the overall laziness that proves to be *The Horror Show Guide's* downfall. The book also has several notable errors, such as a publicity photo from 1994's *Cudzilla* vs. *Mothra* cited as an image from the sequel 1994-





The Horror Show Guide: The ultimate frightfest of movies: *The Shining*

Godnitz above Mayo's review for the latter. The review of *The Howling* series incorrectly refers to "two low-budget sequels" produced after 1985's *New Moon Rising* when in fact there were no sequels between *Rising* and the series reboot in 2011; the entry neither lists nor mentions the two sequels between *Howling IV: The Original Nightmare* and *Rising*.



*Dr. Giggler* is a worthy heir to the throne of classic Universal horror(!). It's a shame that such an attractively designed, potentially interesting film guide contains too many errors and irrelevant entries to recommend it.

ADAM CLARKE

## A PLACE FOR SINNERS

Aaron Brien  
Sarnham

As a child, Amy Collins lost both her hearing and her father on the same day. Thirteen years later, her mother still hasn't been able to come to terms with what transpired. Along with her older brother Caleb, Amy decides that a six-month trip through Thailand is just the thing they need to put some space between themselves and their still-grieving mother. Everything seems to be going well as they see the sights, sample the food and even pick up a traveling companion named Tobias. One day, they embark on an excursion to a remote island, where they'll have a chance to feed the local wildlife. However, shortly after arriving, they begin to go awry, as the island's primate population flies into a seemingly unprovoked murderous rage and fatally attacks the tour group. The survivors soon find themselves trapped miles from the mainland—and there are more than just homicidal monkeys lurking in the jungle.

## THE GRIM READER

### ZOMBIE, INDIANA

Scott Kossman  
Tales From

*Zombie, Indiana*, the third book in Scott Kossman's gut-muncher series, is equally accessible to both new and returning readers. It also offers up a fresh take on a familiar foe by showing how the zombie threat is headed by Indiana's governor, who's more concerned with renovating his state in the new fitness than saving its costing population. In an age where zombie stories have long outlasted their welcome, Kossman delivers a smart, satirical sleeper.

ADAM CLARKE

### THE NINTH CONFIRMATION

William Peter Blatty

For

William Peter Blatty's cult classic *The Ninth Confirmation* gets a reprint long after winning the cheap-chocers and readers of many horror and weird fiction fans. The novella-length tale of a strange outbreak of mental illness among military personnel housed at a large castle-turned-medical facility, is utterly insane and jam-packed with philosophical fleshy bits. It also reads like a script, and can easily be whittled in one sitting.

JESSA DORRINGTON



### XOM-B

Jeremy Robinson  
Thirteen Terms

A weird outbreak is spreading across the world seems old hat, but wait... A genius named Freeman, who's in search of a cure, soon discovers that it was actually unleashed by our former rulers, a race simply known as "Master." More sci-fi than horror, this is still a refreshing take on the genre, which offers a compelling reflection of our modern class structure and dependence on technology.

MIKE BLANDHALL



### THE BLUE CLASSROOM

Rod Lathin  
Sarnham

*The Blue Classroom* has all the elements necessary for a solid, mean story about religious conservatism, institutionalized violence and the (freaky) haunting outcome of covering up both the abuse and a young boy's escape against his abuser. Unfortunately, superficial scores in the book's first third, some contrived, written passages and a large cast of characters (many of whom are depicted before you can truly connect with them) rob this novel of much of its power.

MONICA S. KUEBLER



# THE JULIAN YEAR, GREGORY LAMBERSON'S SPRAWLING TALE OF GLOBAL HOMICIDAL INSANITY, UNFOLDS THROUGH A BRAND NEW DIGITAL STORYTELLING FORMAT

## Near of the PASTHOPE

MICHAEL KOSOVE

**IF YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE POLKS WHO LINGS FOR DELICIOUS SCENES, EXTENDED CUTS AND ALTERNATE SHOTS, NEW DIGITAL READING FORMAT TREEBOOK HAS WELL HAVE BEEN CREATED FOR YOU.**

While, at first, it may sound like a digital version of those klutzy 300-era Choose Your Own Adventure titles, the platform is actually far more advanced. Powered by Motif Press, it allows authors to not only follow the paths of different characters within a story, granting readers the opportunity to experience a tale from several different vantage points, it also opens the doors for writers to explore the different outcomes a single decision could have on the water plot. In other words, it's an unprecedented way to submerge oneself in a book.

This month, Gregory Lamberson's *The Julian Year* will be released as THE Book's inaugural title (available through the MMG Booklock app for iPad). The author, who is already published through the company, admits that he wasn't initially sold on the idea.

"When Adam Meek, the COO of Motif Press Media Group, pitched me the initial concept of the TREBook, I thought to be just a little bit snooty," recalls Lamberson. "Then he told me they wanted me to write the first book in this crazy interactive book line. Just scripping my head around this concept was daunting, but I immediately said yes—I welcomed the challenge."

Lamberson decided to develop *The Julian Year* for the format because, it takes place over the course of one precious year. Starting at 12:01 EST on New Year's Day, people celebrating a birthday turn into homicidal maniacs, attacking and slaughtering strangers and loved ones alike. Within days, hundreds of thousands are dead and the entire world is thrown into a state of emergency, while doctors, scientists and religious experts work to determine the cause of the mass insanity.

"It's a ticking clock story and anything involving a race against time serves the format well," Lamberson notes.

In the book's trunk, or main storyline, we follow a reporter named Julian who chronicles the outbreak as it develops and the "possessed" eventually give a one-sided form of amnesty. Since he's born on December 31, he's in a unique position to catch the events as they unfold, until the very end. As we encounter other characters struggling to maintain the world order—cops, soldiers and the President

of the United States among them—"branches" appear that potentially take the tale in other directions.

"For me, it's always about the characters," Lamberson explains. "I introduced most of my characters in the trunk, then spun most of these off into different situations and plots dictated by circumstances. One of the biggest [issues] was making sure that the control of the story to learn more was Liberty of the Limited, right? For the branching technology as a reader's individual average reading pace—where the reader's habits change, so does the story. It's all organic and seamless,

so the reader is unaware the story has changed. But there are other triggers built in as well, some of them random. I wanted to utilize each trigger that had been created, so sometimes that decided who would live, who would die, and who would get another chance. The overall goal was that every branch a reader takes has to work as a complete story unto itself."

If readers decide the organic experience isn't for them, after they have read the book once, they can view all of the branches and "lock on" to one they'd like to explore and write. One might expect that the added workload of writing a book that's actually multiple books might be the most daunting aspect of the task, for Lamberson the biggest struggle turned out to be a psychological one.

"My issue was generally feeling a protagonist as a journey. I know how the journey starts and know where it ends, and I know a few of the obstacles the protagonist encounters along the way," he says. "I had to let go of all of these pre-concepts for this project. One of the hardest things for me, and it actually caused me to procrastinate, was that between all of the branches, something had to happen in every character—nobody was safe... In the end, it was pretty liberating, because I really got the opportunity to change who these people became by putting them in different situations."

When queried about his favorite outcome, Lamberson is quick to throw himself behind a character instead.

"Without saying which ending I preferred, I will say that my favorite branch follows Rachel Koenigberg, the protagonist who was born on Leap Day. She is a supporting character in the trunk, but the star of a few of the other branches. I love her as a character because she goes through so many changes over the course of the different branches, and I think she's my biggest character."





(like, literally). *A Place for Sinners* just might be worth the head trip

NIKE BEARDALL

## THE HOUSE OF SMALL SHADOWS

Adam Nevill  
St. Martin's

Award-winning British author Adam Nevill (*The Abolition*, *Apartment 19*) demonstrates his flair for atmospheric horror with his latest novel *The House of Small Shadows*, a richly descriptive psychological thriller that examines mental illness, antique taxidermy and the darker side of artistic genius.

Likewise I've been an easy ride for antiques appraiser Catherine Howard, she's dealt with childhood and teen corporate bullying, and suffers from a mysterious mental condition that causes her to lose huge gaps of time. After years of therapy, she lands a dream job at an antiques firm and finds stability in adulthood — until she's selected to appraise the late M. H. Mason's priceless collection of taxidermy dinosaurs and antique puppets housed within his infamous home, the Red House. Then Catherine's sanity and patience are put to the test: The more time she spends inside the mansion, along with its inhabitants Edith Mason and her housekeeper Minnie, and its rooms filled with sanity-shattering art installations, the more apparent it becomes that she is a hostage there.

Most of the horror grows out of Nevill's rich descriptions of the dwelling, and the gut-wrenching taxidermy dinosaurs, lifelike dolls and puppets Catherine is charged with cataloging. The atmosphere is skillfully set to be unnerving, music-evoking and claustrophobic, and though the characters who inhabit the Red House are themselves almost too bizarre to be real, their complete isolation within the mansion (and constant exposure to combining chemicals) makes their particular brand of insanity far too believable for the reader.

Unfortunately much of the novel is spent on the memories of Catherine's sordid past, and her failed relationship with her boyfriend, and the pacing suffers for it. The reader is told a lot of back story without actually getting to witness a great deal of plot. There's a sense of stagnancy here that might be a representation of Catherine's inner struggle, but the introspection hobbles the momentum that was established in the opening chapters, and turns her into far too passive a protagonist.

While *The House of Small Shadows* is worth a read for the atmosphere alone, horror fans looking for something with a faster pace or more spilled blood might want to look elsewhere.

JESSA BORGZINK



## LIBRARY OF DAMNED

REMARK, TIME AND INTERESTS.

As much as I'm a book nerd, I'm also a tech geek. I once told my husband he'd never have to buy me gold or jewels if he kept me supplied with paperbacks. If you're a long-time reader of the column, you'll know I make sequins into new and unconventional digital publishing platforms regularly, as I don't just love horror novels. How exciting how genre literature might evolve as we barrel further into the 21st century.

I was particularly excited about this month's book feature on *The Julian Year* (see p. 90) and how its debut on the new TREEBOOK format could change the way we read stories, as I've decided to use this space to go deeper under TREEBOOK's hood.

As mentioned in the piece, TREEBOOK's branching (exclusively available via the MMG Sidekick app for the iPad) is organic, but what does that mean? As Medialife's director of technology, Brian Buck, explained it, branches are triggered by fourkey commands. And it's not hard to see how these could benefit horror novels — or any work of fiction, really — as some fascinating wigs.

1) *Real Time* (just elapsed time between various points in the narrative and when they were accessed) could indicate reader engagement, and cause the story to branch to a more intense or gore-bloody version, to up the excitement level.

2) *Average Reading Pace* (the reader's average reading speed, another type of time indicator).

3) *Date Time* (the actual month and day that the reader is reading) could cause a story to play out entirely differently depending on the season. Picture the potential effects on the ghosts and survivors should a zombie yarn drag into the fourth month of winter.

4) *Random Chance* — could be anything from an unexpected character death to a split-second decision (good or bad) that sends the story sprawling off in a new direction. If enough random branches are available, the narrative could potentially morph with each read-through.

And the implementation of additional rules could personalize the user's experience even further.

According to Buck, future releases may adopt proof-reading, which would trigger branching based on where a reader is located in the world — imagine being able to follow every *World War Z* character through the entire apocalypse. Other possibilities the company is considering are rules tied to a person's age, birthday and even social network stream.

But for now, Medialife is hard at work prepping five more TREEBOOKs, among them an occult-infused gothic horror novel titled *Dark Seed* by UK author Simon West-Burnett. That book, a period piece set in 1823, will see a village cast into darkness and swamped by monstrous beasts. And that's really all I can tell you, because if we've learned anything about TREEBOOKs, the story you'll read is unlikely to be the same one that I'll be devouring. Exciting stuff.

EMILY A. KYLE

# THE FRIGHT GALLERY

CURATED BY GARY PULLIN

THIS MONTH: WORLDS COLLIDE

**G**iger is a delicate influence," acknowledges Randy Ortiz. "Typically when [I'm] working on pieces that require organic and cybernetic to be melded together I spend a lot of time searching through his work for inspiration on these occasions."

The Winnipeg, Manitoba, illustrator (self-taught), who created the WolfCop image you see on this issue's cover, shares H.R. Giger's flair for deeply textured, flowing, surreal images that meld the natural with the mechanical. It's no surprise that he recently illustrated an *Alien* screen-printed poster for Mondo, but it wasn't the first time he gave his spin on the legendary artist's alien designs for a project. For a previous Mondo gallery show in Austin, Texas, he created Lord Neomorph, a franchise mash-up featuring Dark Vader's mask comprised of Giger aliens.

Both works showcase the distinct elements of his style: expertly rendered line work and challenging geometric compositions seamlessly woven into beautifully grotesque imagery. His spooky *Army of Darkness* collage print for Mondo is also a perfect example.

"Those types of works are done in basically two stages that are somewhat organic," Ortiz explains. "The first step is to make the geometric patterns. This serves as a foundation for the hand-drawn illustrations. Once I shape and place together the shapes, they rarely get changed during the actual illustration process. I use the lines like frames and fill in the empty spaces with art. Then I hope and pray that it all looks good in the end."

Though he describes his approach as "shotgun" in terms of trying new styles and mediums (he's been experimenting with smudging pencils and charcoal),

Ortiz is actually very thoughtful when it comes to concepts. He recently did a *Candide* Hotbeast poster for a new company called Grey Matter, and knew that he wanted to inject the oft-used image of a woman inspired on a stake.

"Basically, the risk and most often overlooked concept behind [Huggins] Goodfellow's film is to question what we see in everyday media," asserts Ortiz. "What is presented to us is not always what it may seem. In *Candide* Hotbeast, we see just that: a film critic fabricating a slaughter of a village for the sake of ratings. I think this message gets lost underneath all the insane and disturbing scenes that the movie is famous for. I wanted to make a poster that reflected the main message."



Ortiz won't spill the sleeve quite yet on his upcoming poster gigs, but he will be in attendance for Austin's MondoCon, which runs in unison with Fantastic Fest in September. He's also currently looking into residencies in Europe.

"I want to get out of my tiny house and explore the world a bit more, get influenced by the unfamiliar surroundings and hopefully bust out some new work."

See more of Ortiz's illustrations at [dummedesigns.com](http://dummedesigns.com)





# THE GORE MET

**MENU:** DOUBLE HELPING OF HOMEMADE GRUE STEW

**T**his column is a feast of synchronicity, with two oddly timed underground films that complement both last month's look at *Disco-punk* and dovetail with this issue's celebration of independent filmmaking. That served is not made in Montreal, Eric Falardeau's *Théâtre d'opéra*.

The plot is a disturbing underground art house fusion of David Cronenberg-style body horror, informed by the necrotic sensibilities of Jörg Buttgereit. Laura (Karyn Flood) ditched her new apartment for depressingly fucking live British boyfriend, Antoine (David Tausignant). Unable to sleep after he leaves, she feebly attempts to work on a clay sculpture before retiring to bed to masturbate out of frustration.

The following day, a weird bruise has appeared on her jaw line, and while she's showering, a couple of her fingernails snap off. After a party with friends that night and more gormless sex with Antoine, Laura's physical condition worsens considerably. Her hair starts coming out in clumps and hot glue won't keep her fingernails attached. When her fingers start breaking off, she desperately tries to sew them back on. She slips into a deep malaise once niggers start crawling out of her open stons, leading only to commit acts of violent murder.

*Théâtre d'opéra* is languorously paced, and with a run time of 160 minutes, perhaps a little too long, but the revolting makeup effects—by David Scherer (*The Strange Colors of Your Body's Bang*), with an assist from Rémy Couture (*Disco-punk*)—are superb. The nihilistic, melancholy score by the Guild of Femenary Violinists suitably sustains the relentlessly morbid mood.

Unearthed Films unveiled this out on DVD and included a making-of featurette, interview footage with Falardeau from the 2012 *Séjour Film Festival* premiere, and three of his short films (*Coming Home*, *La Petite Mort* and *Purgatory*).

The inherent freedom in underground filmmak-



Théâtre d'opéra

ing is that there isn't a producer to dictate what you can put in your film. The drawback is that there is also no one to advise you what you shouldn't put into your film, which applies to Adam Sokolski's directorial debut, *Perseveration*. It's an exquisitely shot parade of perversity and gore, with remarkable sound design, an incredible soundtrack, and brilliant locations and art direction. Unfortunately, upon this frame, is hung a threadbare plot adorned with meaningless shock.

A young boy is kept in a dog cage in the bowels of an abandoned building by an insane Catholic priest who only takes him out to physically and sexually abuse him. One day, the kid slips

his bonds, beats the priest's head in, cuts off his face and makes a meat out of it. Three later, Leatherface-in-a-casock violently abuses and murders young women.

That's it. No twists or attempts at playing with or subverting slasher film conventions other than an artistic level—just rote, formulaic filmmaking. I have to cop to a degree of complicity here: Sokolski was only 21 years old when he made this, I've been watching transgressive films longer than he's been alive, so chalk up my reaction to generational claspiness. While I disagree

with the cover image that treats *Perseveration* as "the most vile indie flick of all time," he clearly intended this film to be that, and it is a technical achievement.

In terms of "vile," Sokolski goes for broke from the get-go. The film opens with an unborn child being crudely cut from a woman's womb and tossed in a garbage can, before a long shot of a room strewn with dead women and casually discarded babies, one of which is headless. Then it cuts to a backwoods rape scene, a boy being beaten and sodomized, and a priest burying a bag of dead babies in the woods. And that's just the first twenty of 74 similar minutes.

There's no more for conventional storytelling in this; it's an onslaught of what is meant to be dis-

turbing and offensive imagery. Unfortunately, it's ridiculously over-the-top. Sokolski dwells so long on gore gags that they literally anore before your eyes. In a heart-stomach scene in which a woman is beaten on the back with a nail-studded baseball bat, you can clearly see the actor pulling his blows and the ladies in the close-up shots breaking down.

*Sokolski* is self-distributing *Perseveration* under his Hellspoke Pictures banner. It's a thoroughly

professional package that includes a behind-the-scenes feature, three trailers and a stills gallery. If only it supported a better film.



# AUDIO DROME

★★★★★ **HELL**    ★★★★★ **SLASHER**    ★★★★★ **SCARY**    ★★★★★ **HELL**    ★★★★★ **SCARY**    ★★★★★ **HELL**

REVIEWS BY MICHAEL OLSZEY, MARK B. MANN, AUSTIN WELCH, LUTHER CHAPMAN, STEVEN JAY, JEFFREY M. HARRIS, AND SUSAN TILSON



## OCULUS

The Newton Brothers

Video: **Shogakukan**

**Oculus** is a score designed to have slasher-drama dialogue tracks and emerge as short dialogue clips for endless shock value. As a result, it becomes almost inert when separated from its movie. The Newton Brothers' soundtrack is designed of waves of brief

snatches of variable density, isolating thematic fragments and a kind of grey sonic mist that either rises slowly or punches out with frenzied jabs in as the screeching "Fingerate!" Clamber strings, processed choir and woodwinds and some warmth and feelings of regret ("Graphic Photos," "History of the Mirror"), but by the score's middle there's an emerging stoniness, especially the cyclical use of throbbing drones. It's clear the music was designed to lock audiences in a state of perpetual angst (if not to keep a subviewer constantly active) in cinema, but apart from a few tangible dramatic elements, it's easy to forget the soundtrack is playing at all. **B-** **8.5**

have dropped a limited-edition 7-inch soundtrack. Although this oddity about a score who buys a custom doll as storage on its own merits, the short-on-video production was made at the moon estate by its buzzing Casio keyboard score, best described as a John Carpenter composition "mixed through a flea market. The sound has been cleaned up for release, but it still maintains a rough-to-hi quality. Although it does not call for the same intense focus as, say, something by Ennio Morricone or Fabio Frizzi, the EP does succeed in transporting the listener back to the wretchedly fun experience of rewatching the film, at only a fraction of the running time. **D** **5.5**



## SLASHER FLICKS

Enter the Slasher House

Drama

Any Tim's *Slasher Flicks* debut album is born out of indie singer-songwriter Collective Bandman Dave Foster's love of retro horror pop songs (think "Monster Mash") and deep affection for shivery '80s masked killer movies. But make no mistake: This is no horror pop album. Enter the Slasher House is a jazz-infused psychedelic ride through odd experimental sound designs, jarring and janky. It's the sort of album that's hard to wrap your head around, but with persistence there is payoff. The horror influence isn't immediately obvious — it's not like there are songs about specific films — but there is an undeniable darkness that infuses each track with general unease beneath their happy, upbeat exterior. "Little Fang" is the most accessible song with its step-locked hook, but none-revolving neo-discounting numbers "Modern Days 1" and "Strange Colors" which will send the listener to another planet altogether. Any Tim's *Slasher Flicks*

has created a colorful nightmare one that you'll wake up from wanting more. **C** **6.5**



## SUPER WITCH

The Sun EP

Electronic

Turning out of Memphis like the reimagined corpse at this on a potent twister and amphetamine leader, *Super Witch* makes a racket best described as a slower-mental MOS limited by a narrow-minded Ted Nugent. *Slasher Flicks* (Oculus) is a genre that's creating faster than Daria's cat, but *Super Witch* manages to stand out in the weed-soaked crowd with the stomping, thrashing, and thrashing, and by recording its debut EP live in the legendary Sun studios with no overdubs it comes across raw as hell, but still works. With low songs in film minutes. The Sun EP doesn't even stay its welcome. There of the tracks ("Super Witch this House," "Tales of Madness" and "Satanic Terror House")

*Space*) are standards, showcasing a fun, intricate feature side of psychedelic southern rock while "Space Witch" is a filler of three-minute clips. While not perfect, *Super Witch* shows a caution full of promise. **B** **8.5**



## GHUL

Wing Ten EP

Electronic

Question: What do you call four rock-metal-wielding, grooved-trampling dream into who have turned their dream obsessions towards their culture? Answer: An invitation to a damn good time! *Ghoul*, long-time over-the-top in the Church of Sordid (at Concoct, 1985), change times as this EP to devote down from gritty grind/funk to groovy beer rock. A couple of local references to the "Carnival Motorcycle Club" show Map the closer to concept album territory but any sentence of a story is overshadowed by the broader concept of life on



## BLACK DEVIL DOLL FROM HELL

Chester Nevill Turner

Video: **Shogakukan**

Chester Turner's *Black Devil Doll from Hell* has been getting attention lately thanks to Massacre Video's re-release of this mid-century no-budget horror film. As a complete piece independent vinyl distributors Passions Mind

## ROSEMARY'S BABY

Christopher Komeda

Video: **Shogakukan**

Legendary Polish doctor/jazz pianist Christopher Komeda collaborated with Rosemary Turner (a member of the early 1960s The Four Tops) on the early 1960s *The Four Tops* album (1964-66), but Rosemary's *Baby* was her last known and probably final score. As for the film's highly haunting, heavy over the male title's famous melody, which quickly gives way to duets, more foreboding pieces that introduce the listener to the movie's malevolent theme. In which deeper burials just beneath the surface. All set just at some times and Eastern European folk at others, it's the dark, haunting atmosphere underneath that gives the music and film its chilling effect. *Wormhole* is a LP represents the first time the entire score has appeared in vinyl, re-mastered from the original master tapes. The physical presentation is top notch with a deluxe gatefold jacket featuring art by Jay Shaw and extensive liner notes, making this a critical artifact for the most ardent of Hollywood's sidekick fans. **A** **9.5**



**IN HEAVY METAL MOVIES, AUTHOR MIKE McPADDEN REVISITS PLENTY OF NEGLECTED HORROR TITLES AMONGST HIS SSS REVIEWS**

# THE WAY TICKER TO HONKING

by MICHAEL McPADDEN



## HEAVY METAL AND HORROR MOVIES HAVE BEEN LINKED SINCE BLACK SABBATH RAINED ITSELF AFTER A LONG RAINY DAY. FILM.

The use of both genres in the '70s and '80s broadened and merged classes such as Black Sabbath, Roadhouse, Blood and Jack or Evil the film companies tried to cash in on both audiences. Now, Mike McPadden's *Heavy Metal Movies* (published by Essential Films) The book goes beyond the obvious to include weird-and-wonderful epics (Club of the 2000s), horror classics (Newbury's *Body*), and exploitation gross-outs (Cannibal Ferox). Plus, a bonus update to McPadden about the connection between heavy metal and horror movies.

### What inspired you to write *Heavy Metal Movies*?

I needed some sort of organizational umbrella for all my interests, those being hard rock, heavy metal, punk, horror and exploitation movies. I read Jack Carrasco's *Destroy All Monsters*, the punk movie book. It was brilliant. I was fascinated as to how great it was. I fantasized and plotted what was essentially the heavy metal answer to *Destroy All Monsters* (I put together a proposal in December of 2010) and sent it to the Editor of Essential Films, which was the only company with which I wanted to work. It was probably a week or ten days later when he got back to me, and we began work immediately.

### How do you define heavy metal movies in the book?

I watch *Satan's Six*, *Conan the Barbarian*, *Exorcist* and *Samurai*, and something in each of those movies is heavy metal. I love *Poltergeist*, *Poltergeist*, *Spirited* and *The Devil's Blood*. They all sound different, but they're all somehow heavy metal. My definition was to find, per movie, how these movies were "heavy metal" in nature.

### How do you explain the rise of metal-themed movies in the '70s?

Rock at metal being "born" in 1970 was the first black Sabbath album. It grows up during the '70s, and then hits adolescence in the 1980s. What are many teenagers doing? Movies and music. It was the perfect cultural storm, because it

was the end of the Deadhead exploitation era, and the rise of home video. For so many people I loved them, and I include myself here. Saturday night was all about beer, weed, headbangers, and so many horror movies as you could stick in the VCR until you passed out. The '80s were the most "metal" decade, and what's new metal than your teenage years? Nothing.

### There were some great cheesy heavy metal horror movies released that decade. Do those get much coverage?

There's not one of those '80s heavy metal horror movies that I don't love. *Dick and Dee* having not seen it in a while, I have to say that I was shocked there was no book at that time, because it was such a blast to watch back then. That's actually an achievement, I think. The book is my favorite, however. That one has slipped through the cracks a bit, and I hope I can help revive it with this book.

### How do you explain the inclusion of so many Italian Eurobeat titles, such as *Antropophagus* and *2000 Years a Glitch*?

I was born in 1968, and I was the classic horror and exploitation with heavy metal largely... I lived in high school from '82 to '88 in Manhattan on 16th St., and I was a heavy-metal walk or two subway stops from 42nd St. I was always there, which is crazy to think now of a 17-year-old who had accidentally playing up his heavy metal for a day of movies! The *Satan* films were the bread and butter, or maybe "bread and circuses" at 42nd St. throughout my high school experience, beginning with *Conan the Barbarian* and *Samurai*. Then *Satan* to obscure stuff like *Manhattan*.

### How do you feel the cinematic time has shifted since the '80s metal horror movie explosion?

Everything is so different now. There's no longer a unifying force like headbangers and that million of kids are experiencing at the same time, and that's because of online media. You have to know that there will never be another *Black Sabbath*, because we'll never have another *Ed Sullivan Show* so as things get more fractured, they get more specialized.



# PLAY DEAD

NOW PLAYING> JOE DEVER'S LONE WOLF, BLOODRAYNE BETRAYAL



## JOE DEVER'S LONE WOLF

PC, iPhone, iPad, Android  
Roguelike

The line between horror and dark fantasy is a blurry one. Both genres employ monsters, graphic bloodshed and brutal storylines with almost equal competence. So while Joe Dever's *Lone Wolf* is definitely dark fantasy, there's no denying its appeal for horror fans—plus it's one of the most intriguing indie-phone games of its kind.

Loosely based on the *Lone Wolf* gamebooks of the '80s, which sold millions of copies, the game combines decision-based storytelling with time-based RPG-style combat and random events. You are Lone Wolf, the last surviving Kai Lord, the rest of your warrior order was massacred. After embarking on a mission of greed, you return to find your homeland overrun by evil, its citizens being slaughtered. And you're the only one left who can stop it. At the onset of the game, you choose your fighting style, weapons and special skills (you must expertise: psychic powers, stealth, animal communication, etc.). These skills play into what choices will be available to you as you encounter obstacles in the story and help with puzzles such as puzzle-solving or lockpicking.

Combat, which uses your fighting skills (only-eyed cabinet), Dever's (his) score, made-wearing (combat) and various (combat) abilities, is one based on your skill set and uses on two energy meters and a time, plus your ability to pull off precision



finger strokes on the screen, so there's definitely some strategy involved, especially if you play on "hard."

Four chapters evolves via item drops, gear upgrades and specific combat/strategy experiences. When not fighting, the story is told in book form, with some phenomenal black and

white art to keep things interesting. All in all, it's a dark, engaging adventure, but only if it's being called out specifically. Act 1 is free, the rest (Act 2: Forest) must be just released as available individually or through a season pass; each one takes three to four hours to play through thoroughly, making the journey more satisfying than most other indie-styled games.

MONICA S. KUEHLER



EXPERIENCE INTENSE STORY MECHANICS, DYNAMIC, DYNAMIC CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT  
MODERN, A NEW TYPE OF ANIMATED ACTION



## BLOODRAYNE BETRAYAL

PC  
Action/Strategy

Still grieving the cancellation of *World of Warcraft*, the vampire-themed MMO RPG? Perhaps you can find some solace in this long-overdue PC port of *Bloodrayne: Betrayal*, and fondly remember a time when it was much easier to get bloodsucker games made. That said, this being a side-scrolling, action-adventure platformer, you won't get going to get in any much deeper than hitting the on-screen and take out the bad guys, that is, if you even have time to take in the story and our heroine Rayne's witty asides with all the vampire, monster and creepy creatures coming at you.

Though the plot is only a few lines long (just many conversations between them), combat is hectic and non-stop. Action-mixing works for fighting (jumpy, jumpy, jumpy) and you can attack, but in order to execute some of the more difficult moves and to land the complicated jumps you'll have to be more deliberate with the finger.

The graphics are cartoonish, but it's a really good job—there's no shortage of spurring blood, exploding, gelatinous, dark, monstrous, threatening insect eyes and other scary details—far from fun. The game's mechanics are relatively smooth and the art is really a vampire

love: our red-haired character who looks like a vampire is sensitive to light, can turn into a revenant and sucks blood from a human to regain health (when not recharging it at a blood-sucking vampire). Checkpoints are frequent, so if you do you never have to go back too far to try again, and, trust me, you will occasionally get stuck. The environment is as deadly as the monsters, with all manner of spikes,



creatures, moving walls and other deadly bits of machinery to negotiate. Some of the first chapters have and bosses, like the the skeletal spider-like things early in the game, that require a bit of trial-and-error to defeat, others don't, which is a nice change of pace.

If you've got a soft spot for fast-paced action-adventure and haven't had a chance to play this on any other platform, it's definitely worth giving your stake into.

MONICA S. KUEHLER



EXPERIENCE INTENSE STORY MECHANICS, DYNAMIC, DYNAMIC CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT  
MODERN, A NEW TYPE OF ANIMATED ACTION



# CLASSIC CUT

## SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

HECTOR BERLIOZ & FRANCE ~ 1830

**F**irst performed in 1830 when Romanticism was taking Europe's art scene by storm, Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* remains a staple of symphony orchestras around the world. It broke new ground in musical innovation for its use of the "ideal form" that influenced Wagner's interests, and for helping to popularize program music: a symphony with an accompanying story. As it turns out, it's also a pretty wicked-out score-fest, particularly in its final movements.

Berlioz wrote *Symphonie Fantastique* at the tender age of 27, while under the spell of Irish Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson, and heavily influenced by Beethoven's emotive symphonic works. Strangely enough for such a progressive composer, he'd only just encountered symphonic music ten years earlier while a medical student.

The story placing the five movements together is the stuff that self-destructive artists is made from. It concerns a sensitive young musician (quite possibly a stand-in for Berlioz himself) with an overactive imagination. He's inebriated one night (Smithson?) and in a fit, overcomes his opium, instead of death, the opium spurs on a series of increasingly harrowing visions in which he kills the girl, they culminate in a march to the guillotine and the infamous "witches Sabbath," depicting the musician's own funeral.

It's this last sequence that features the "Dance Macabre," a 13th-century Latin hymn used to accompany dances. The "Dance Macabre" is quoted in countless works of the macabre, particularly from film scores, ranging from a humorous job in Disney's *Elf* to the nightmare before Christmas ("Making Christmas") to an intense chase sequence in John Williams' *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Perhaps it's best remembered by film aficionados in Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of *The Shining*, signaling the long drive up to the Overlook Hotel. In Berlioz's hands, the "Dance Macabre" is used both musically and played ironically to catch listeners off-guard.

The symphony also plays host to a range of unusual instrumentalizations suggesting the supernatural — among them, a distant funeral bell and percussive col legno strings (played with the wooden part of the bow) to mimic clanking skeletons — effects which can also be heard in the strings in Holst's *The Planets* and

the opening to Jerry Goldsmith's *Planet of the Apes*. Also noteworthy is Berlioz's orchestration of the postcard's bandaging, consisting of a swift mass chord to mimic the fall of the guillotine, and plucked string plucks for the rolling band. Other orchestral effects are used to portray wailing sirens and the cackling of witches.

If orchestration such as these seem over-the-top, it should be noted that Berlioz would go on to write a well-regarded treatise on instrumentation, and *Symphonie Fantastique's* orchestral effects paved the way for future composers. The use of some music to suggest the macabre may have influenced Verdi's witch music in *Macbeth* (1847) and Wagner's ghost ship in *The Flying Dutchman* (1843).

Looking to *Symphonie Fantastique* today, one has to put its spooky innovations into context. It's not overflowing with eerie stability or jarring dissonance, particularly when comparing it to more unsettling modern orchestral music, such as works by Krzysztof Penderecki or György Ligeti, whose compositions were used to add heightened tension to *The Exorcist* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* respectively. Nor did Berlioz's program symphony provide purported notes, as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913 premiere) is alleged to have done.

Nevertheless, the work marks an abrupt shift in the history of orchestral music, pushing a less ordered and more "personal" sound further beyond the yardstick that Beethoven threw down. It's a deliberate slow burn, moving from more reserved domesticity into the stuff of musical nightmares, swaying with the allegedly wild moods of its composer. Leonard Bernstein noted it as being "apocryphal stuff... because those sounds you're hearing come from the first psychological symphony in history."

One might even argue that the music's shifting tempos and dynamics — a hallmark of Romantic-era composition — have had an influence on the rhythms of horror films, which make particular use of fluctuations between silence and overwhelming soundscapes. So the next time you pop in your copy of *Supernatural* and kick back to enjoy Gabriel's crazy "witch" theme in all of its strange acoustic glory, just know that some genius Franciscan bred them to it by about 150 years.

JET STYRIAS

